

# Life in Limbo

Sarah ten Berge Joëlle Spruytte

This thesis seeks to explore the spatial framework that co-determines “Life in Limbo”. This metaphor is used to describe the life of asylum seekers during the asylum procedure. It refers to the state of uncertainty as they are waiting, in some cases for years, for the verdict on their application.

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# Life in Limbo

A spatial analysis of the Brussels reception centres  
and the lived experiences of their residents.

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Thesis submitted for the degree of  
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Architecture

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# Leven in het Ongewisse

Een ruimtelijke analyse van de Brusselse opvangcentra  
en de belevingswereld van hun inwoners.

Joëlle Spruytte Sarah ten Berge

Thesis voorgedragen tot het behalen  
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## ABSTRACT

Brussel is een stad die gekenmerkt wordt door haar migratiegeschiedenis. Maar hoe ontvangt Brussel zijn asielzoekers vandaag de dag, tegen de achtergrond van een permanente crisis? Dit is een veelzijdige, interdisciplinaire kwestie die zowel politieke, sociale, als ruimtelijke dimensies omvat. Het zijn de ruimtelijke dimensies die deze studie nader onderzoekt. De thesis analyseert hoe de aankomstarchitectuur en -infrastructuur van Brussel wordt beleefd en bewoond door zijn inwoners. Aan de hand van de belevingswereld van asielzoekers en medewerkers in de centra wordt onderzocht in welke mate er sprake is van een inclusief opvangsysteem.

Aangezien inclusie kan verschillen tussen migrantengroepen en plaatsen (Kearns & Whitley, 2015), werd de vraag onderzocht aan de hand van veldonderzoek in en rond vijf verschillende aanmeld- en opvangcentra in Brussel, en op basis van 25 interviews met asielzoekers en medewerkers. Elk van de vijf centra bevindt zich in een andere gemeente en verwelkomt een andere doelgroep, op basis van gender en/of leeftijd. Het ruimtelijk onderzoek is onderverdeeld in drie schaalniveaus: macro, meso en micro. De macro-analyse brengt het aanbod van, en de toegang tot, “sociale infrastructuur” binnen de “15-Minuten Stad” rond de opvangcentra in kaart. Ze representeren plaatsen waar steden als inclusief en uitnodigend kunnen worden ervaren (Latham & Layton, 2019, pp. 2). Waar de macro-schaal het aanbod aan infrastructuur bestudeert, tracht de meso-analyse te achterhalen welke plaatsen de bewoners van de opvangcentra daadwerkelijk wensen of behoeven. De meso schaal zoomt in op de infrastructuur die een aantal bewoners in hun dagelijks leven gebruiken. De micro-analyse, ten slotte, wordt gewijd aan de architectuur van de opvangcentra en de belevingswereld van bewoners en medewerkers. De micro schaal tracht een impressie te geven van “het leven in het ongewisse”. Dit leven vindt zijn oorsprong in de reis die aan de aankomst in Brussel voorafgaat (Fase 0), omvat de eerste ervaringen bij aankomst (Fase 1), en gaat verder in de opvangcentra (Fase 2).

Samengevat beoogt deze studie een diepgaande analyse - ook al is deze gebaseerd op een beperkt aantal bewoners - van het traject van asielzoekers in ruimte en tijd. De drie fasen worden elk afzonderlijk behandeld in het licht van stedelijke inclusie. De studie toonde aan dat een inclusief opvangsysteem radicale hervormingen zou vereisen. Niettemin tracht het laatste hoofdstuk in dit werk na te gaan of er binnen het bestaande ruimtelijke kader een mogelijkheid voor verandering bestaat.

## ABSTRACT

Brussels is a city marked by a history of migration. But how does Brussels welcome its asylum seekers today, in the face of a permanent crisis? This is a multifaceted, interdisciplinary issue that incorporates both political, social and spatial dimensions. It is the spatial dimensions that this study aims to address. The thesis explores how the arrival architecture and infrastructure of Brussels is experienced and inhabited by its residents. Through the lived experiences of the reception centres, it examines to what extent one can speak of an inclusive reception system.

Since inclusion may differ across migrant groups and places (Kearns & Whitley, 2015), the question was examined through field research in and around five different arrival and reception centres in Brussels, and through a total of 25 interviews with asylum seekers and staff members. Each of the five centres is located in a different municipality and welcomes a different target group (based on gender and/or age). The spatial research is divided into three scale levels: macro, meso and micro. The macro analysis identifies the provision of, and access to, “social infrastructures” within the “15-Minute City” around the reception centres. They represent “sites where cities can be experienced as inclusive and welcoming” (Latham & Layton, 2019, pp. 2). Whereas the macro scale examines the provision of infrastructures, the meso-analysis seeks to assess what places the residents of the reception centres actually desire or require. The meso scale zooms in on the infrastructures that some of the residents use in their day-to-day lives. Finally, the micro-analysis is devoted to the architecture of the reception centres, and lived experiences by residents and staff. The micro scale level seeks to give an impression of “life in limbo”. Such life is rooted in travel prior to arrival in Brussels (Phase 0), includes first arrival experiences (Phase 1), and proceeds in the reception centres (Phase 2).

In short, this study aims to present an in-depth analysis – even if based on a limited number of residents – of the asylum seekers’ spatio-temporal trajectory. It addresses each of the three phases separately in the light of urban inclusion. The study showed that an inclusive reception system would require radical reform. Nevertheless, the final chapter of the thesis explores whether there is a possibility for change within the existing spatial framework.

## LEXICON

### A. KEY CONCEPTS

#### Life in limbo

Collins English Dictionary (2022) explains the idiom ‘being in limbo’ as follows: “If you say that someone or something is in limbo, you mean that they are in a situation where they seem to be caught between two stages and it is unclear what will happen next”. This thesis seeks to explore the spatial framework that co-determines “Life in Limbo”. This metaphor is used to describe the life of asylum seekers during the asylum procedure. It refers to the state of uncertainty as they are waiting, in some cases for years, for the verdict on their application.

#### Urban inclusion

The meaning of “urban inclusion” in this work is inspired by the DESINC LIVE project which will be discussed in “Background of the thesis” (pp. 11-13).

#### Asylum seeker – Refugee – Economic migrant

An asylum seeker is a person who requests international protection but whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. If the country recognizes the claim, the person is entitled to asylum and is called a refugee. “A refugee is a person who has fled their country of origin and is unable or unwilling to return because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion” (Amnesty International, 2021). Thus, in this study the terms asylum seeker and refugee are used before and after recognition respectively. Economic migrants however – people who leave their country of origin purely for financial or economic reasons instead of for persecution (Amnesty International, 2021) – are not the focus of this research.

#### 15-Minute City

This is a concept, initially proposed in 2016 by Carlos Moreno, that re-emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic (Moreno et al., 2021). The concept refers to an urban planning based on proximity, seeking an optimal density that would have access to basic facilities within a 15-minute walk. This would reduce the time spent by residents travelling and thus increase the time for interaction with other members of the community (Moreno et al., 2021).

### B. ORGANISATIONS

#### Fedasil

The Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers is a public utility institution that was established by the Programme Act of 19 July 2001 and has been operational since May 2002. Since 1 October 2020, Fedasil is supervised by Sammy Mahdi, Secretary of State for Asylum and Migration. “Fedasil is responsible for the reception of applicants for international protection and other target groups and guarantees high-quality reception and conformity within the various reception structures” (Fedasil, 2021). Fedasil also coordinates the organisation of voluntary returns to countries of origin.

#### The Red Cross

The Red Cross Belgium promotes different humanitarian ideals. They carry out several missions, including assistance for Migration and Asylum. “National Red Cross works to support migrants throughout their journeys and once they are settled. They deliver essential services to all migrants, including humanitarian assistance, medical and psychosocial support, family reunification, asylum reception centres, and activities to address other longer-term needs” (Red Cross EU Office, n.d.). As a Fedasil partner, they have been accommodating asylum seekers since 1989 (Fedasil, n.d.).

#### OCMW

OCMW is an abbreviation for “Openbaar Centrum voor Maatschappelijk Welzijn”. OCMW provides social services to persons legally residing in Belgium and in need of social assistance (Belgium, 2022). “The aim of the social welfare services is to enable everyone to lead a life according to human dignity” (Social Security, n.d.). The assistance is provided in different ways, such as financial aid, medical aid and housing. In the context of migration, the OCMW assists refugees in their search for housing after their asylum application has been approved. Often they are temporarily housed in an LOI, “a small-scale reception initiative for asylum seekers, organised by an OCMW and financed by the federal government” (Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering, n.d.).

## BACKGROUND OF THE THESIS

This thesis was preceded by participation in two international workshops in the summer of 2021 as part of the “Practices of Urban Inclusion” course from the DESINC LIVE project. The course on inclusion was organised by a team of four universities - London Metropolitan University, Universität der Künste Berlin, Politecnico di Milano en KU Leuven - and three civil society organisations - Architecture Sans Frontières-UK, Refugees Welcome Italia en Schlesische 27 - across Italy, Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom (De Carli & Caistor-Arendar, 2021). The course raised interest in the issue of migration and urban inclusion and thus inspired the thesis topic.

*“This course asks how we can plan, build and put into practice cities that promote inclusion. The course centres around the lived experiences of migration, displacement and exile as key perspectives to understanding how urban spaces can produce or challenge exclusion. In doing so, the course explores how urban planning, architecture and spatial practice can contribute to making cities of care and conviviality, where more people feel welcome in more spaces” (De Carli & Caistor-Arendar, 2021).*

Two workshops were organised in relation to this interface between urban inclusion and the built environment. The first workshop, led by UdK and S27, was organised in Marzahn, a district in the outskirts of Berlin. “Here, a refugee camp initially set up as an emergency shelter is now one of the largest accommodations for refugees in Berlin” (De Carli & Caistor-Arendar, 2021). It is one of the sites in the German capital where exclusion becomes very tangible, as they are isolated from the city centre, invisible to the rest of the Berlin population. “The workshop engaged with this context through the ‘experimental construction site’ known as Stadtwerke mrzn, initiated by S27 in 2020 as a model campus for the new citywide urban practice network” (De Carli & Caistor-Arendar, 2021). Through creativity, they seek to revitalise the site, activate refugees and enable them to develop their talents while learning German. The second workshop took place at San Siro, Milan, which is a large public housing complex where a significant proportion of the population has a migration background (De Carli & Caistor-Arendar, 2021). Similar challenges of inclusion characterise this area. “Despite its physical proximity to the city centre, the area is generally perceived to be part of Milan’s periphery due to its challenging material and social conditions, ranging from intense intercultural and intergenerational conflicts to poor buildings maintenance” (De Carli & Caistor-Arendar, 2021). Here we were hosted by Politecnico de Milano and Refugees Welcome Italia.

During both workshops, the group of international students and researchers were divided into three different scales. A first group studied the public space and street life, another group studied the semi-public spaces such as the courtyards, and a last group studied the housing in the district. These were called the macro, meso and micro groups respectively. Through on-site fieldwork and social interaction with local residents, challenges of inclusion were exposed. The workshops triggered an interest in the relationship between migration and urban inclusion on the one hand, and the built environment on the other hand. As a result, the idea of exploring this issue in the context of the Belgian capital was born. The thesis also adopted the workshop approach, based on fieldwork and interaction with residents, as well as the structuring of the spatial analysis in the different scales (macro, meso and micro).

Being a complex and contested term, the course compiled several ideas and concepts associated with inclusion, rather than providing a single definition that would reduce its meaning. The concepts are presented on the following pages.

# Practices of urban inclusion: Designing an experiment in education - Defining Inclusion

## Access

Access is the opportunity to reach the resources and relations that one might need to move forward on a journey. For example, access could mean the opportunity to use services such as healthcare, find information and be advised, reach different networks, and find a job and decent housing. Environmental, economic, social and legal factors can all create barriers to accessing opportunities: because they are far, unaffordable, or made unavailable by someone's status and papers.

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2002 A. SEN. *Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny*. Manila: Asian Development Bank.

## Agency

Agency is the freedom of an individual to independently choose and do the things that she or he values, within the limits and opportunities set by wider social and spatial structures. In the context of migration, agency can be heavily affected by the legal as well as social, political and cultural frameworks defining a migrant's status, which can constrain or expand the choices that are available to her.

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2015 I. A. CELIK. In *Permanent Crisis: Ethnicity in Contemporary European Media and Cinema*. Chicago: University of Michigan Press.

2016 N. AWAN. *Diasporic Agencies: Mapping the City Otherwise*. London: Routledge.

2017 ISAYEV, E. *Between Hospitality and Asylum: a Historical Perspective on Agency*. *International Review of the Red Cross, Migration and Displacement*. 99(904): 1-24.

## Belonging

A sense of belonging stems from the feeling of being connected to a social, spatial, cultural or other types of community. It has to do with personal and collective recognition (see below), with care and affect, and with the feeling of being seen, accepted and supported by the people around us. An important aspect of belonging is reciprocity, in that a sense of belonging involves the desire and capacity to provide the same care and attention to others.

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2016 K. ASKINS. *Emotional citizenry: Everyday geographies of befriending, belonging and intercultural encounter*. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 41(4), pp.515-527.

2011 G. CALUYA. *Domestic belongings: intimate security and the racial politics of scale*. *Emotion, Space and Society* 4(4), pp. 203-210.

2006 A.M. FORTIER. *Community, belonging and intimate ethnicity*. *Modern Italy* 11(1), pp. 63-77.

## Empowerment

Empowerment is the process of gaining the freedom and power to do something. Here power is not defined as 'power over' or 'power to', but as a power 'that emerges from within', which is positive and life-affirming. In relation to inclusion, empowerment can occur through the attainment of essential affective, political and material resources, tools and skills. Importantly, empowerment is supported by an environment that nurtures the creativity, potential and capabilities of each person and group.

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2005 N. KABEER. *Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions*. London: Zed Books.

2013 *Empower, Equip, Enable*. Cambridge English Dictionary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

2015 UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, (A/RES/70/1)*. New York.

## Multiple membership

The phrase 'multiple membership' refers to the idea that identity is complex and human beings naturally make connections across many communities at once: of place, of culture, of interest, and so forth. At the same time, multiple membership acknowledges that our position at the intersection of different social identities (gender, class, race, religion, age, dis/ability and more) influences how we understand the world and ourselves, what opportunities we afford, and how we relate to places and people.

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1991 K. CRENSHAW. *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color*. *Stanford Law Review* 43(6):1241-99.

2010 T. T. MINH-HA. *Elsewhere, Within Here: Immigration, Refugeeism and the Boundary Event*. London: Routledge.

2014 S. COSTANZA-CHOCK. *Out of the Shadows, Into the Streets: Transmedia Organizing and the Immigrant Rights Movement*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

## Open-endedness

An open-ended framework (be it legal, political or spatial) is one that does not have fixed limits but is rather mutable: that is, a framework that can develop in several ways to accommodate change. An open-ended approach to inclusion is one that continually reflects on, improves and modifies social and spatial contexts so that they can respond to changing populations and accommodate their diverse needs and aspirations.

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2010 M. MOSTAFAVI. *Ecological Urbanism*. Baden: Lars Müller Publishers

2014 C. REED & N.M. LISTER. *Projective Ecologies*. New York: Harvard University GSD & Actar Publishers.

2017 M. MOSTAFAVI (ed.). *Ethics of the Urban: The City and the Spaces of the Political*. Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers.

## Pluralism

Pluralism is based on the acknowledgement that different ideas and lifestyles should coexist within society as the outcome of a conscious process of respect and attribution of value. It extends beyond notions of diversity and cosmopolitanism by highlighting mutual engagement and choice. A pluralist position advocates for the flourishing of many perspectives within a common (spatial) framework.

- 
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2003 L. SANDERCOCK. *Cosmopolis II. Mongrel Cities of the 21st Century*. London & New York: Continuum.  
2005 W.E. CONNOLLY. *Pluralism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

## Protection

Protection refers to a legal or other formal measure intended to preserve rights. Article 1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood". Displaced persons often have no protection from their own State. If other countries do not protect them, they may be condemned to a situation where their basic human rights and their lives are in danger.

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- 1948 UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (217 [III] A)*. Paris.  
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2016 A. BLOCH & S. MCKAY. *Living on the Margins: Undocumented Migrants in a Global City*. Cambridge: Policy Press.

## Reciprocity

Reciprocity is the mutual adaptation of persons and groups to each other (by each toward the other). In relation to inclusion, reciprocity refers to the interactions between minorities and majorities, and between privileged and disadvantaged individuals and groups. In the context of migration, reciprocity highlights that for inclusion to take place, we need to transform places and institutions and eliminate the barriers that newcomers encounter so that they can fully participate in society.

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- 2003 C. MOHANTY *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Cambridge: Duke University Press.  
2007 M. SLOTE. *The Ethics of Care and Empathy*. London: Routledge.  
2016 K. TROGAL. *Caring: Making Commons, Making Connections*. D. Petrescu and K. Trogal, eds. *The Social Production of Architecture*. London: Routledge.

## Recognition

Recognition is the act of acknowledging and respecting another being. How we are recognised and how we recognise others play a powerful role in our lives: social and political recognition shape our sense of who we are, and our understanding of how we are valued by our peers. In the context of migration, a focus on recognition invites us to continually question how difference is acknowledged, accommodated and respected in society.

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1984. A. LORDE. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press.  
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2003. N. FRASER AND A. HONNET. *Redistribution or Recognition: A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. London: Verso.

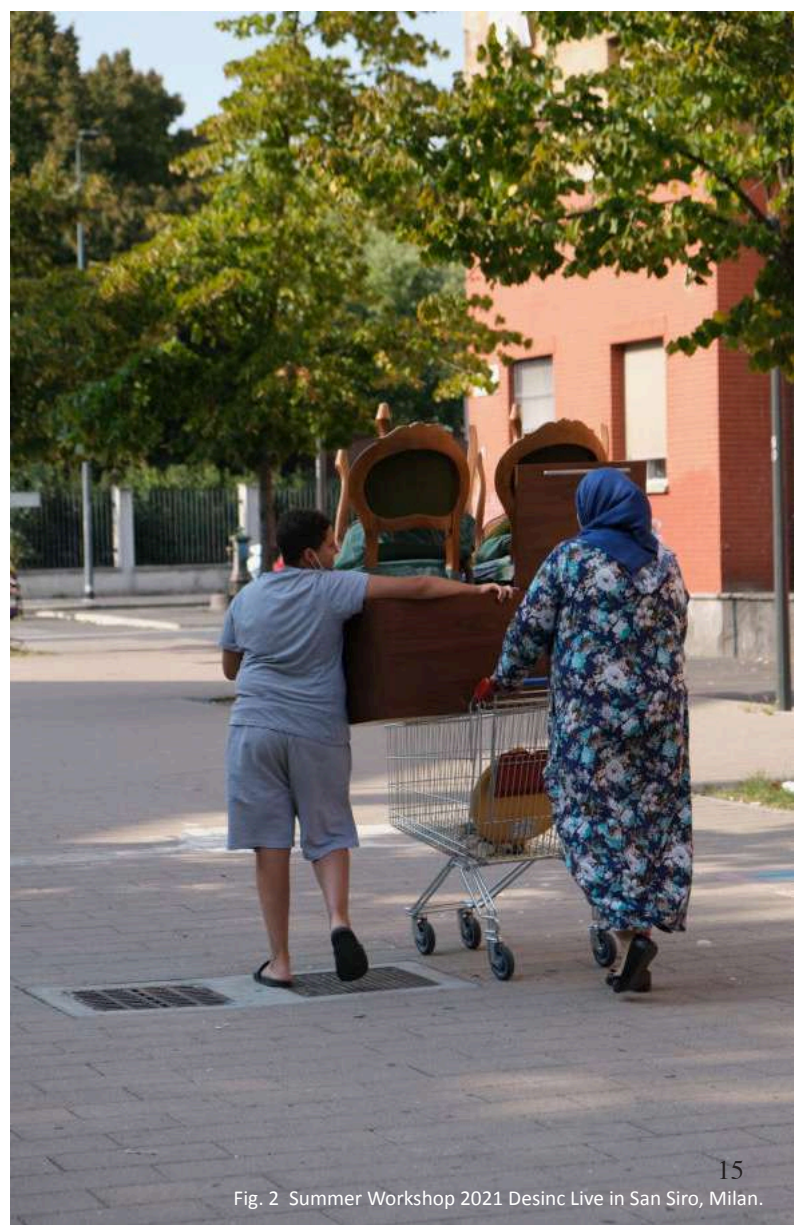
## Space

Space plays a pivotal role in facilitating or hindering inclusion. In 1974, French philosopher Henry Lefebvre famously wrote: "(Social) space is a (social) product ... the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action ... in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power". Engaging with the context of migration inevitably requires adopting a spatial lens, to read and challenge practices of exclusion across places and scales.

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- 1974 H. LEFEBVRE. *La Production de l'Espace*. Paris: Anthropos.  
2017 T. ARMBORST, D. D'OCA & G. THEODORE (Eds.). *The Arsenal of Exclusion and Inclusion*. New York, Barcelona: Actar Publishers.  
2021 S. HALL. *The Migrant's Paradox: Street Livelihoods and Marginal Citizenship in Britain*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.



Fig. 1 Summer Workshop 2021 Desinc Live in Marzahn, Berlin (Dürrer, n.d.).





## INTRODUCTION

Displacement is a phenomenon that has always been, and will continue to be, present. Armed conflicts, human rights violations and persecution are just some of the 'push factors' that expel people from their home countries (European Parliament, 2020). In 2021, 25971 people applied for international protection at the Immigration Office in the City of Brussels, which is an increase of 53.6% compared to the preceding year. Whereas the number of applicants was still relatively low in January and February 2021 (1377 and 1422), the number gradually increased to reach a peak of 3326 by September (CGVS, 2022a). The thesis was launched that same month. "This exceptionally high number can be explained mainly by the Red Kite evacuation operation, during which many Afghans came over to Belgium" (CGVS, 2022a). On 15 August 2021, the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan (Amnesty International, 2021), causing a new wave of displacement. Barely six months later, during the course of the thesis, the Russian-Ukrainian War triggered the next influx of newcomers. In March 2022, Ukraine topped the list of the countries of origin of applicants for international protection (CGVS, 2022b). Through the succession of migration waves, resulting in a permanent influx, a permanent asylum crisis has emerged. Given this context, this thesis aims to examine how this displaced population is accommodated in the Brussels-Capital Region.

As the inflow of asylum seekers continues, the number of free beds available in the reception network is decreasing. On the 2nd of May 2022, 94% of the 30490 reception places (beds) are occupied, distributed among collective reception centres and individual dwellings (Fedasil, 2022). As "people's everyday lives are affected by space and specifically by their built environment" (De Carli & Caistor-Arendar, 2021), this thesis aims to address the living conditions in the collective reception centres. More than a mere spatial analysis, it attempts to provide insight into the lived experiences of its inhabitants. These experiences are the thread that runs through this research on the inclusiveness of the reception network.

To explore how the arrival architecture and infrastructure of Brussels is experienced and inhabited by its residents, 5 arrival and reception centres were visited, 15 asylum seekers were interviewed, and 10 conversations were conducted with Fedasil and Red Cross staff members. Despite the pressure on the reception system and the COVID-19 pandemic, the fieldwork took place owing to their willingness to engage in this research. According to the figures of May 2022, 39.5% of the asylum seekers in the reception system are family-based persons, 46% are single men, 6% are single women and the remaining 8.5% are

unaccompanied minors (Fedasil, 2022). To allow for all of these groups to be represented, interviews were conducted in different centres that together house all these different target groups. Regarding their testimonies, the decision was made to use their exact wording for the authenticity of the information. As a result, the thesis also includes Dutch and French language terms.

The first chapter of the thesis sets the context for the research in the five arrival and reception centres. To illustrate how displacement is not a recent phenomenon, the history of migration to Brussels is presented, based on the exhibition at the MMM Migration Museum in Molenbeek. Next, the accommodation during the asylum procedure in Belgium is studied, highlighting the complex reality that exceeds the linearity of the theoretical trajectory. To contribute to a better understanding of displacement, the second chapter is devoted to the journeys that the 15 interviewees made to reach Brussels, referred to as "Phase 0". The thesis then delves into the analysis of the five Brussels centres, sharing the lived experiences of its inhabitants and testimonies from the staff. On the basis of these five case studies, the final chapter attempts to deduce a number of themes that are central to the reception system. Considering these themes, it investigates whether there is a possibility for improvement within the existing spatial framework. In this final reflection, possible alternative futures are imagined to trigger conversations about future design and planning decisions.

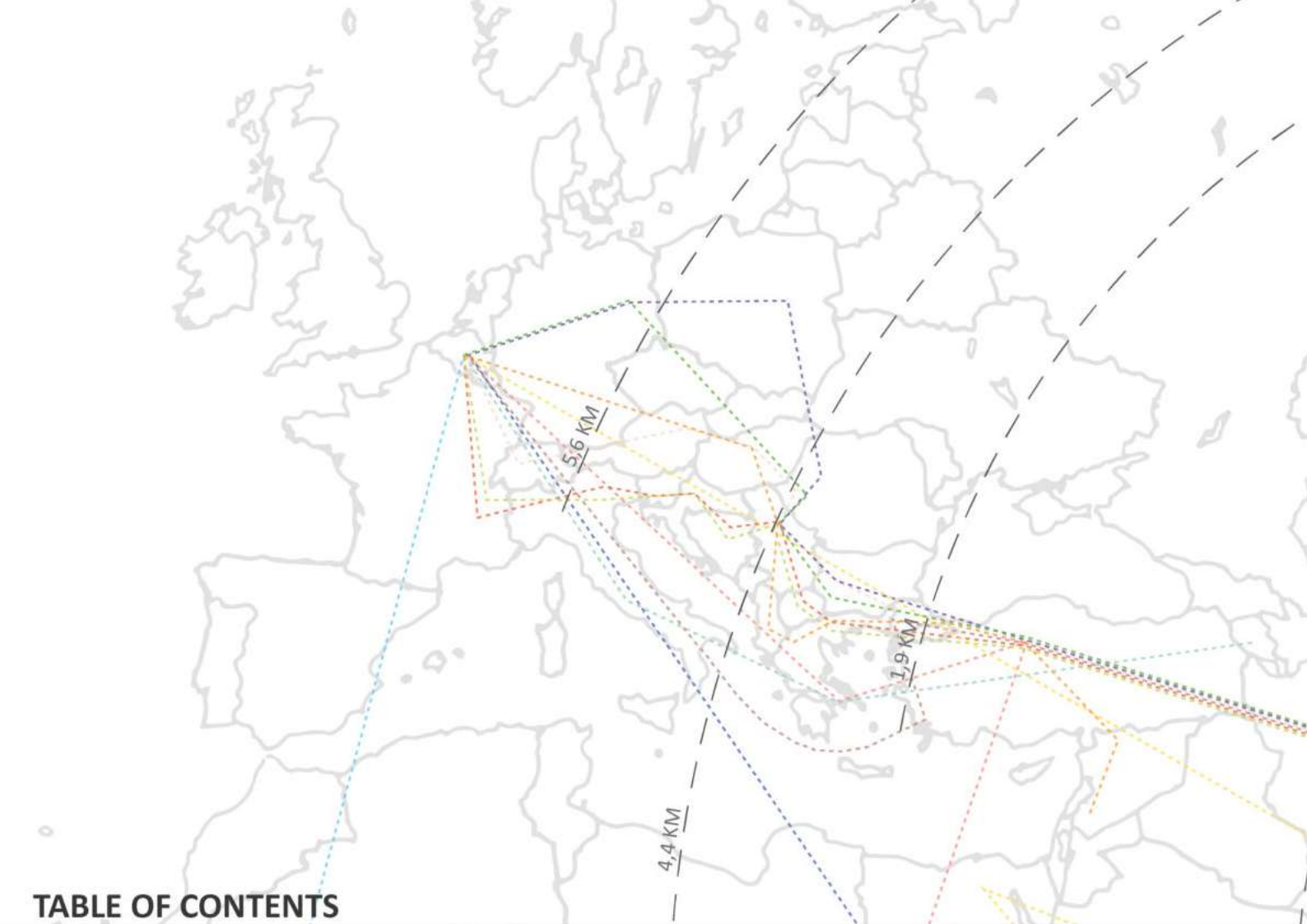
## Endnote

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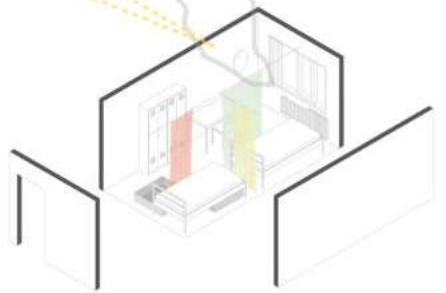
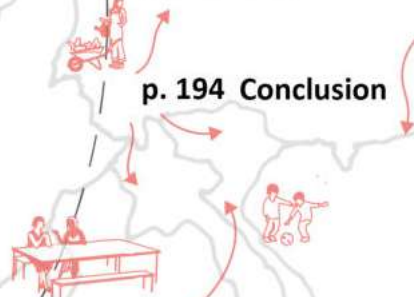
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(IN)HOSPITALITY  
IN BRUSSELS



# BRUSSELS MIGRATION HISTORY

## 19th century: Flemish and Walloon farmers.

DISCLAIMER.

The phasing and contents of the following timeline were based entirely on the timeline and information exhibited at the MMM Migration Museum in Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, with the exception of the section on the Russo-Ukrainian War.

MMM. (2021). Brussel, een stad, 184 nationaliteiten, eens zoveel verhalen om te delen. [Timeline exhibition] Exhibited at Sint-Jans-Molenbeek. December 21, 2021.



Fig. 2 Eleanor Roosevelt holding the English language version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Roosevelt : FDR Presidential Library & Museum, 1949).

## 1946-1974: Welcome, guest workers.

MEN FOR THE MINES.

After the Second World War, 1940-1945, Belgium lay in ruins. The reconstruction requires a lot of workers and energy. Coal is the main source of energy. The coal has to be taken out of the mines, which is heavy and dirty work. There are too few miners. That is why people go abroad to look for guest workers.

### THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM.

The right to seek asylum in another country for fear of being persecuted is one of the universal human rights. The 1951 Geneva Convention prohibits countries from returning asylum seekers to their country of origin if they risk persecution there on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

## MIGRATION FLOWS

1946

1951



Fig. 1 Brussels-Charleroi canal in the 19th century (Discover Brussels, n.d.).

## ITALIANS.

On 20 June 1946, there is an agreement with Italy. The migration of strong and healthy Italians is strictly regulated. They arrive in Belgium by train. In the mines, many are frightened by the work they have to do but they cannot leave. Their contract states that they have to work in the mine for five years. Afterwards the guest workers have the right to work in another sector. The contract promises the guest workers a wage and a roof over their heads. However, most of the houses are of terrible quality. On 8 August 1956, a major mining disaster takes place in Marcinelle, Charleroi. More than 262 miners lost their lives. 136 of them are Italian. The Italian government decides not to send any more compatriots to the Belgian mines.



## BRUSSELS GROWS.

In the 19th century, industry grew along the canal. Many poor farmers from Flanders and Wallonia come to Brussels to work in the factories.



## SPANIARDS, GREEKS, MOROCCANS & TURKS.

After the Marcinelle disaster, Belgium starts looking for workers in Spain, Greece, Morocco and Turkey. Belgium launches advertising campaigns in these countries to lure men here. One of Belgium's advantages is that after a few months of permanent employment, the wives and children of guest workers are also welcome. The agreements regulate official labour migration. The procedure has strict rules. For example, the candidates are subjected to a medical examination. Not everyone comes to Belgium this way. Many workers come with a tourist visa. If they have found a job, the boss often arranges for the work and residence permit. Because there is so much work, they are very flexible.

## WORK, WORK, WORK.

Since the sixties, Brussels industry flourished. Large and small factories and businesses such as Citroën and Côte d'Or, were recruiting men and women. Besides labourers, maintenance and cleaning staff are also in high demand. Female migrants often find work as domestic staff with wealthier Brussels families. STIB employs immigrant workers as tram drivers and technicians. Attracted by employment opportunities, the group of guest workers in Brussels is growing.



1957

1964

1969

### EUROPEANS.

Within the borders of the European Community, later the European Union, there has been free movement of workers since 1957. Any national of a Member State may move to another Member State to work.

In 1970, 16% of Brussels residents were foreigners. This means that they do not have Belgian nationality.

## (IN)HOSPITALITY

### BUILDING YARD BRUSSELS.

The golden years of the 1960s begin. It is a period of enormous growth and investment. Cities and ports need workers. Migration to Brussels grows, especially after 1964. In Brussels, new neighbourhoods, roads, train connections, offices, bridges, etc. were built. On the building sites, Spanish, Greek, Moroccan-Arabic, Berber, Turkish, Italian etc. are spoken.



### THE FOYER.

Because there is so much work, the guest workers are well received. The people of Brussels are hospitable and also curious. The government does not organise any reception or integration. Neighbours help newcomers on their way. Local associations get involved. Volunteers organise reception and homework classes. In 1969, the Foyer is created in the neighbourhood of the Brussels-North railway station. It was the first to organise activities for the children of guest workers.



## 1974-1986: Migration remains possible.

In 1981, almost 24% of Brussels residents have foreign nationality. Most foreigners come from countries around the Mediterranean.

1974

### MIGRATION STOP: THE END OF AGREEMENTS.

Economic growth stops at the end of the 1960s. Unemployment rises, especially after the 1973 world oil crisis. Despite the crisis, guest workers do not return to their country of origin. In 1974, the government ended the agreements on labour migration. The government speaks of a migration stop. This measure only applied to guest workers. Other forms of immigration continue to exist. These include family reunification, workers from EU countries, students and expats, and refugees.

## 1986-2000: People on the run.

### THE ISSUE OF MIGRATION.

Unemployment continues to grow in the 1980s. Opposition to migration increases. Landlords no longer want to rent out their properties to non-Belgians. Brussels organisations react against this racism with demonstrations, actions, poster campaigns, etc. Politicians are realising that it is time for a vision. The *Koninklijk Commissariaat voor Migranten* is set up to investigate the issue of migrants and to formulate policy proposals.

### FAMILY REUNIFICATION.

Even after the migration stop, the group of newcomers from the Mediterranean region in Brussels is growing. The right to family reunification offers an opportunity to bring wife and children to Belgium.

1973

Fig. 3 Car-free Sunday due to oil crisis in 1973 (Zin Magazine, n.d.).



Fig. 4 "Klein Kasteeltje" in the 19th century (Inventaris Bouwkundig Erfgoed, n.d.).



### HUNGARIANS, CHILEANS AND BOAT PEOPLE.

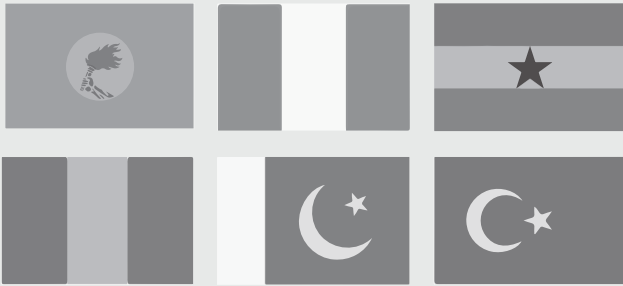
Until the 1980s, there are few individual asylum seekers. Vulnerable refugees come to Brussels in groups thanks to United Nations resettlement programmes. Here, charitable organisations and NGOs take care of reception. OCMW provides financial support.

1986

### FIRST ASYLUM CRISIS : "KLEIN KASTEELTJE".

Meanwhile, more individual asylum seekers find their way to Brussels. The NGO reception centres are filling up. The pressure on the Brussels OCMWs is getting high. The government decides to open a large reception centre. The government chooses the "Klein Kasteeltje", a former military post. On the 14th of November 1986, the first refugee was welcomed in Klein Kasteeltje.

In 1988, 4476 people applied for asylum. They came from Zaire, Nigeria, Ghana, Romania, Pakistan and Turkey.



### EUROPEANS.

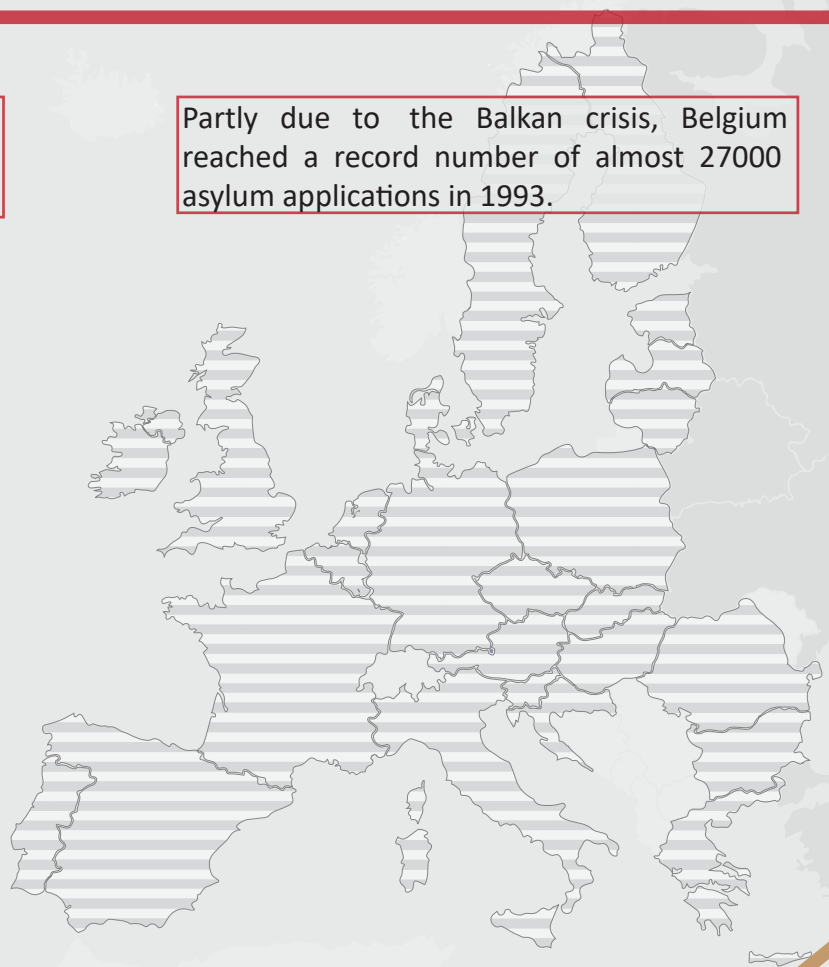
The European Union expands over the years from 6 countries to 28. The migration stop does not apply to workers from EU countries. The group of Europeans in Brussels is growing and becoming more diverse. The migration freeze does not apply to candidate refugees either.

1988



In May 1988, the government establishes the *Commissariaat-Generaal voor Vluchtelingen en Staatslozen*. From then on, this service approves or rejects asylum applications. The *Dienst Vreemdelingenzaken* registers the applications. Brussels becomes the arrival point for candidate refugees.

Partly due to the Balkan crisis, Belgium reached a record number of almost 27000 asylum applications in 1993.



1989

In 1989, the state secretary in charge signed an agreement with the Belgian Red Cross for 500 additional reception places, the first outsourcing of the reception policy. The Red Cross opened 14 reception centres in the following three years.

### THE WALL FALLS DOWN.

When the Berlin Wall falls in 1989, the world changes. Before that, it was almost impossible to travel from Eastern Europe to the West. The fall is the starting point for several waves of migration from Central and Eastern Europe to Brussels.



Fig. 5 The fall of the Berlin Wall (Het Parool, 2019).

# 2000-Present: Superdiverse Brussels.

2000

## NEW BELGIAN RECORD.

In 2000, the number of asylum applications peaks at 46855, due to conflicts in their home countries. The wait for approval is sometimes long. The group of people without papers is growing. The government decides to launch a large regularization campaign in 2000. 36000 files are submitted and almost 80 % receives a residence permit.

From 2000 onwards, the population of Brussels has been growing rapidly. In 2011, Brussels counts 1119088 inhabitants. This is 145523 more than 10 years earlier.



LOIs.

Despite the creation of several federal centres and an emergency reception centre in Woluwe-Saint-Pierre and Neder-over-Heembeek, the reception centres could no longer cope with the influx. Consequently, Minister Vande Lanotte launched the local reception initiatives or LOIs. From then on, OCMWs organised local houses and in two years time, this generated more than five thousand new places.

## NEW ARRIVALS FROM POLAND, ROMANIA AND BULGARIA.

New arrivals from these countries show a striking increase. Thanks to the enlargement of the European Union, they are able to settle freely in Brussels.

2007

## DOUBLE NATIONALITY.

From the 1990s onwards, the conditions for acquiring Belgian nationality became less strict. In 1990, 21031 inhabitants of Brussels become Belgian, while 21803 become Belgian in 2001. This causes a shift in the statistics. From then onwards, there is a growing number of Brussels residents who have Belgian nationality but are of foreign origin.

## RECEPTION LAW OF 2007.

The European guideline on minimum requirements for the reception of asylum seekers had to be converted into Belgian law. Eventually, this resulted in the Reception Law of 12 January 2007. Due to the announcement of a large regularisation campaign at the end of 2007, the outflow from asylum centres stopped. In 2008, for the first time, there was a lack of reception places, as a result of which asylum seekers in Brussels ended up on the streets and in hotels, and squatted in buildings. In this crisis period, Fedasil made a quantitative leap forward, but qualitatively the opposite happened.

FEDASIL.

In 2002, the government established the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) to coordinate the asylum reception. Furthermore, the reception network became more specialised: Klein Kasteeltje opened the first 16 flats where asylum-seeking families can live autonomously, a separate reception circuit for unaccompanied minors was created, as well as a separate emergency reception and reception for unaccompanied teenage mothers.

In 2015 more than one million people will arrive in Europe. Most of them are fleeing from inhuman conditions. In Belgium 44760 people ask for asylum.



#### A NEW ASYLUM PEAK.

There is not enough reception. Tents are set up in the Maximilian Park. Volunteers and NGOs provide support, food and emergency aid. But not everyone wants to apply for asylum here. Some want to travel on to Great-Britain.



By the end of March 2022, 24369 Ukrainians had already registered in Belgium due to the Russo-Ukrainian war. This happens mainly at the Heysel in Brussels. Belgium expects an estimated 200000 more to arrive (HLN, 2022).



Fig. 7 Emergency village on Antwerp Left Bank (Maeterlinck, n.d.).

2015



Fig. 6 Migration flow (De Oemma, 2020).

On 1 January 2018, there are 1198726 inhabitants of Brussels. More than 180 nationalities live together. 35% of Brussels residents are non-Belgian, but the group of Belgians is also very diverse: almost 70% of Brussels residents are of foreign origin. This means that they have parents and/or grandparents who were born in another country.

2022

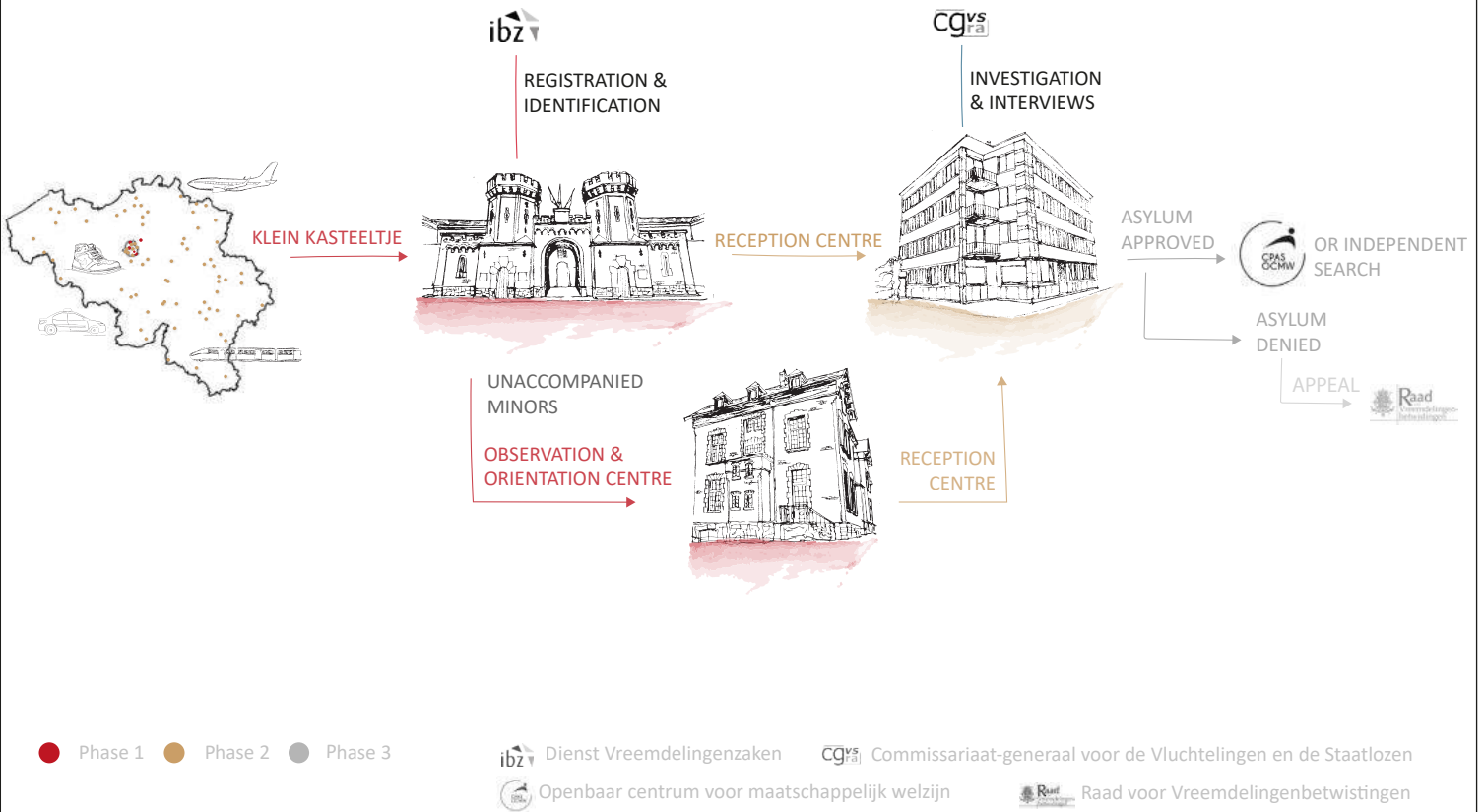
#### EMERGENCY SHELTERS.

The Belgian state provides a specific process for the registration and reception of Ukrainians. However, Ukrainians are entitled to temporary protection at the European level. Consequently, they have to register in the former Bordet Institute in Brussels (Fedasil, 2022). Part of the population will be accommodated in emergency villages. Two of these villages are already under construction. The first one is being constructed on the Antwerp Left Bank, while the second emergency shelter will soon be set up in Mechelen.

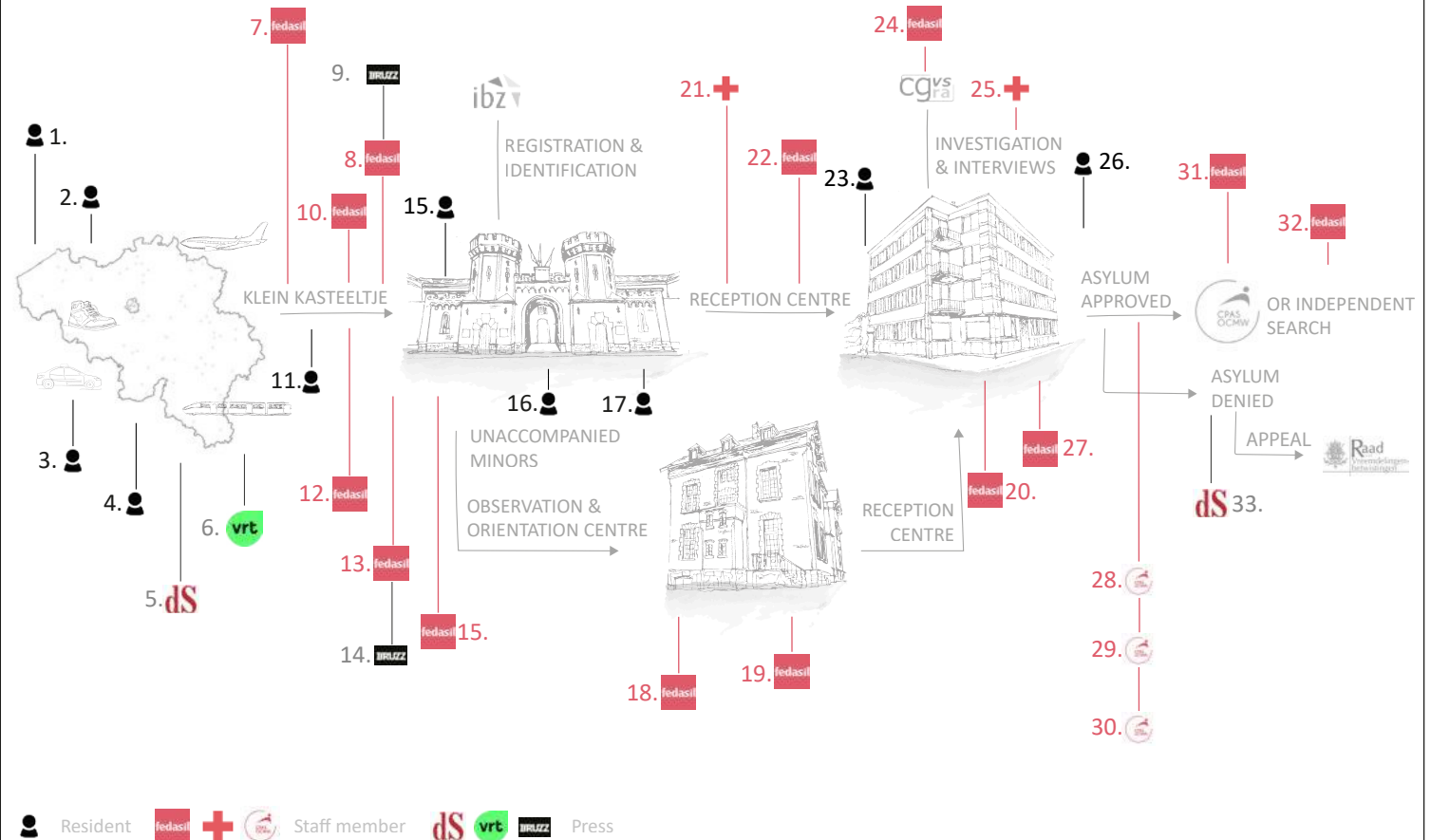
#### THE RUSSO-UKRAINIAN WAR.

The Russo-Ukrainian conflict started in 2014. Eventually, Russia managed to annex Crimea in the summer of that same year. Military activities of the Russian army started up again in Ukraine in 2021 and in February 2022, Russia invaded the country (Wikipedia, 2022). Since then, millions of citizens fled the country to safer areas such as the adjacent states and the rest of Europe.

# THEORETICAL SPATIAL TRAJECTORY



# ACTUAL SPATIAL TRAJECTORY



## HOUSING DURING THE ASYLUM PROCEDURE

After introducing the Brussels migration history, the question is how does Brussels manage the migration challenge today. Asylum-seekers applying for international protection in Belgium must follow a specific procedure, which has been in place since 2007 (Fedasil, 2020a). Fedasil, together with partner organisations such as the Red Cross, provides them with accommodation during this procedure. First, the applicant must register at the arrival centre, which since 2018 is housed in Klein Kasteeltje in the City of Brussels. At the back of the building, the “flow” queues every morning. Once one has entered, the arrival trajectory, comprising five stages, begins.

In stage one, also known as the red stage, one is checked for possession of weapons and then passes through the “front desk”. Next, one arrives at the yellow stage where the Immigration Office registers the application and verifies whether Belgium is responsible for handling the application. The Dublin Regulation states that Belgium can redirect the asylum seeker to the relevant European member state (Fedasil, 2020a). In these offices, with the help of interpreters, they conduct a first interview with the applicant. A photograph and fingerprint are taken to create an “identity card”, called Annex 26. Afterwards, the applicant is subjected to a medical examination in the green rooms. This is also where the first contact with Fedasil occurs during a social interview. In the next stage of the arrival trajectory, the orange zone, Fedasil’s Dispatching department will decide whether the applicant is entitled to reception. If one is not admitted to stay in Klein Kasteeltje, information is provided about Samusocial, Prodeo, hospitals etc. where one can go, whereupon he or she is asked to leave the building. The other applicants complete the trajectory in the blue rooms and are expected to attend the welcome speech (M. Meirlaen, personal communication, December 21, 2021).

The stay in Klein Kasteeltje is called “Phase 1”. For unaccompanied minors, however, Phase 1 proceeds differently. After the arrival trajectory, they are immediately transferred to an OOC, Observation and Orientation Centre, where they stay for a few weeks. During this stay, a medical, psychological and social profile of the minor is drawn up. In this way, they can refer the minor to the reception facility that is best suited to his or her needs. Meanwhile, the “Voogdijdienst” investigates whether the applicant is in fact unaccompanied and underage (Fedasil, 2020b).

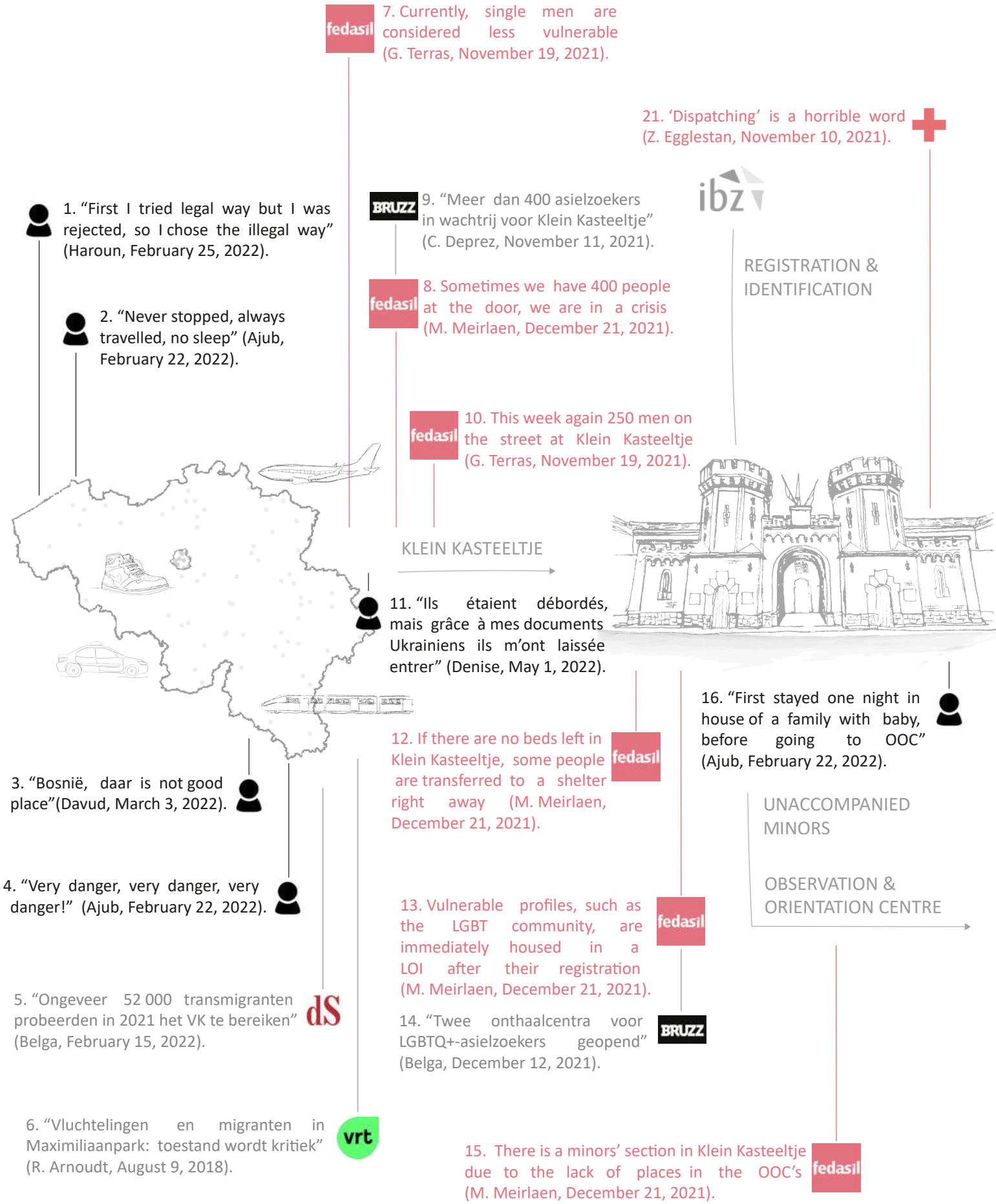
After the stay in Klein Kasteeltje or an OOC, the applicant is transferred to a reception centre of Phase 2, matching their profile. The asylum seeker will stay there until the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) has reviewed his or her application. “During an interview with a CGRS employee, the applicant for international protection is given the opportunity to tell his story and specify the reasons

for his application” (Fedasil, 2020a). There are three possibilities: either the CGRS refuses the application, or refugee status or subsidiary protection is granted. If the asylum application is denied, the asylum seeker must leave the country. However, the applicant can still appeal at the “Raad voor Vreemdelingenbetwistingen” (RVV). This college can revise the decision (Fedasil, 2020a). If the refugee status is granted, one entitles the applicant to an initial limited stay of five years in Belgium (CGVS, n.d.). The third possibility, subsidiary protection, is a residence status that can be granted to someone who is not eligible for refugee statute, but who is at risk in the home country (Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering, n.d.). This statute shall be revised every year.

If the refugee status or subsidiary protection is granted, the person enters Phase 3, which means he or she can no longer stay at the reception centre. Again, there are three possibilities to find a private accommodation (F. Khali, personal communication, November 2, 2021). The first possibility is to get help from the OCMW in the search for affordable housing. The OCMW can temporarily house them in an LOI (Lokaal Opvang Initiatief) financed by the federal government (F. Khali, personal communication, November 2, 2021). However, one can also choose to stay at the reception centre for an additional two months and look for accommodation independently. Thirdly, there is the possibility of leaving the reception centre immediately, for example if the person can find accommodation with a family member. In this case, the centre offers assistance for early departure in the form of meal vouchers, amounting to 560 euros for an adult (Fedasil, 2020c).

Testimonies from residents and staff members of the asylum centres reveal that in reality, the procedure is more complex than in theory. On arrival at Klein Kasteeltje, many have experienced a difficult and sometimes traumatic journey. Immediately they are divided into two rows: one row for families, women and minors and one row for single men who are considered less vulnerable. Therefore, they do not always manage to enter. In this permanent crisis, the lack of places is not only an issue in Klein Kasteeltje. The reception system is not resilient to the fluctuating influx, as a result of which many reception centres and OOCs are overcrowded. Consequently, in Phase 2, asylum seekers are not transferred to the most suitable reception centre, but rather to the first available bed. Due to the long procedure led by the CGRS, this stay can nowadays last up to years. In the meantime, the asylum seekers live in limbo. Also in Phase 3, the search for accommodation appears to be barely feasible. Not to mention the people who are refused and stay in the country, or those who do not enter into the procedure at all. Without elaborating any further, the words of the inhabitants, the staff and the press speak for themselves on the following pages.

# ACTUAL ARRIVAL TRAJECTORY



fedasil

24. The CGVS is very slow. The procedure used to take six months, now it takes two to three years (M. Meirlaen, December 21, 2021).



25. The duration of the procedure depends on the investigation (Z. Egglestan, November 10, 2021).



26. "Je suis ici depuis 2019, presque trois ans!" (Hadiya, February 25, 2022).

cgvs  
ra

INVESTIGATION  
& INTERVIEWS

fedasil

22. In theory, we look which reception centre fits the profile. But in reality 'don't meet the match' (M. Meirlaen, December 21, 2022).

23. "J'ai demandé de changer de centre, tu peux faire ça qu'une fois" (Yousra, May 1, 2022).

RECEPTION CENTRE



ASYLUM  
APPROVED



OR INDEPENDENT  
SEARCH

ASYLUM  
DENIED

APPEAL



ds

33. "Begijnhofkerk in Brussel bezet door sans papiers" (Kma, February 1, 2021).

fedasil

27. Many myths exist about the different reception centres (M. Meirlaen, December 21, 2021).

RECEPTION  
CENTRE



fedasil

20. According to the observation, the minor is sent to the most suitable reception centre. In practice, they are transferred wherever there is a bed available (G. Terras, November 19, 2021).



28. We usually search via Immoweb, 2dehands, Facebook Marketplace, but it is very difficult to find a home (E. Omokoko, December 23, 2021).



29. Clients with a social network in Belgium, like friends or family, are more likely to find a home than clients without a network (E. Omokoko, December 23, 2021).



30. When landlords or estate agents hear that they have someone from the OCMW on the phone, the accommodation is often 'already rented' (E. Omokoko, December 23, 2021).

fedasil

19. In practice, the observation takes 4 to 8 weeks instead of a few weeks (G. Terras, November 19, 2021).

fedasil

18. Sometimes an adult cousin, older brother or companion is hosted in the OOC as well (G. Terras, November 19, 2021).



## Endnote (In)Hospitality in Brussels

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Fig. 1.: N.N. (n.d.). Discover Brussels [Photograph]. Discover Brussels. <https://discoverbrussels.wordpress.com/2016/07/19/kanaal-brussel-charleroi/>

Fig. 2.: N.N. (n.d.). Eleanor Roosevelt holding the English language version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [Photograph]. Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal\\_Declaration\\_of\\_Human\\_Rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights)

Fig. 3.: N.N. (n.d.). Herinneringen autoloze zondag. [Photograph]. Zin Magazine. <https://www.zin.nl/2019/11/08/herinneringen-autoloze-zondag/>

Fig. 4.: N.N. (n.d.). Negende Linielaan. Voormalige kazerne “Klein Kasteeltje” [Photograph]. Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest INVENTARIS VAN HET BOUWKUNDIG ERFGOED. <https://monument.heritage.brussels/nl/buildings/32802>

Fig. 5.: Delpher. (2019, November 10). De voorpagina van Het Parool van 10 november 1989. [Photograph]. Parool. <https://www.parool.nl/nieuws/dit-schreef-het-parool-een-dag-na-de-val-van-de-berlijnse-muur~be67c00f/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>

Fig. 6.: N.N. (2020, February 14). [Photograph] De Oemma. <https://deoemma.nl/over-asiel-en-migratie-een-historisch-ideologische-analyse/>

Fig. 7.: Maeterlinck N. (n.d.). Antwerps nooddorp klaar voor eerste Oekraïense vluchtelingen [Photograph]. Vrtnews. <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnews/nl/2022/04/27/antwerps-nooddorp-voor-oekraïense-vluchtelingen-klaar-voor-gebru/>

PHASE 0:  
THE ROAD TO BRUSSELS



## MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Before examining the Brussels asylum centres in more detail and sharing the lived experiences of some of its residents, it is important to realise that their migration stories did not start at Klein Kasteeltje. For some, their story might have started a few hours before, for others it goes back years. Not only the duration of the journey, but also the modes of transport differ, and even more so the variety of experiences along the way. Each individual story can contribute to a better understanding of displacement, both its social, spatial and political dimensions.

In her research on mapping trajectories of displacement, Awan (2020) points out that “it is now commonly understood that in many journeys of displacement, and especially those made by forced migrants, there is no direct route that can be traced from point A to B” (Ahsan Ullah, 2013; Hassan & Börklund, 2016; Shaffer, Ferrato, & Jinnah, 2018). Awan (2020) refers to the journey as a ‘social process’ that forms the places through which people travel. Migrants may stay in a particular location for a certain time, but this is not always the final destination. Sometimes they travel on to another destination or they are deported. “At the same time, deportation regimes and militarised borders keep people moving” (Awan, 2020), what Khosravi (2018) terms circulation: ‘a controlled movement of people sent back and forth between undocumentedness and deportability: between countries, between laws, between institutions.’

A striking example of this is the Schengen Area. The 26 countries that are part of it have agreed that internal border controls within this area are abolished which means people can move passport-free. But importantly, there is no corresponding common immigration and asylum policy within this zone. Different countries apply different policies (John et al., 2014a; Europese Commissie, n.d.). Furthermore the Schengen acquis also implied the strengthening of controls at external borders (Wikipedia, 2022). In order to travel to the Schengen Area by regular means such as aeroplane or ferry, passengers must have the right papers for entering their destination country. To obtain a visitor’s visa, you need to show a valid passport, adequate medical insurance, sufficient means of support and there must be no risk of illegal immigration (John et al. 2014b; Europese Commissie, n.d.). The difficulty of obtaining a visa to enter the Schengen zone is one reason that so many people take the risk of travelling by dangerous, irregular methods (John et al., 2014c). As one of the interviewees in Brussels testified: “First I tried legal way but I was rejected, so I chose the illegal way.”

In research on asylum seekers’ journeys, many different mapping methods are used. In order to tell the story of our interviewees in Brussels, some inspiring references are explored to examine how journeys can be represented and which elements can be derived from it to apply in this mapping exercise. In this way, the maps are an attempt to reveal some of the socio-spatial elements and relationships of displacement. It is important however to stress that these are merely fragments of much more complex stories.

## 4 METHODS FOR MAPPING DISPLACEMENT

A. Le parcours de Mustafa - S. Bachelierie & S. Clair  
(*Migreurop Atlas des Migrants en Europe*)

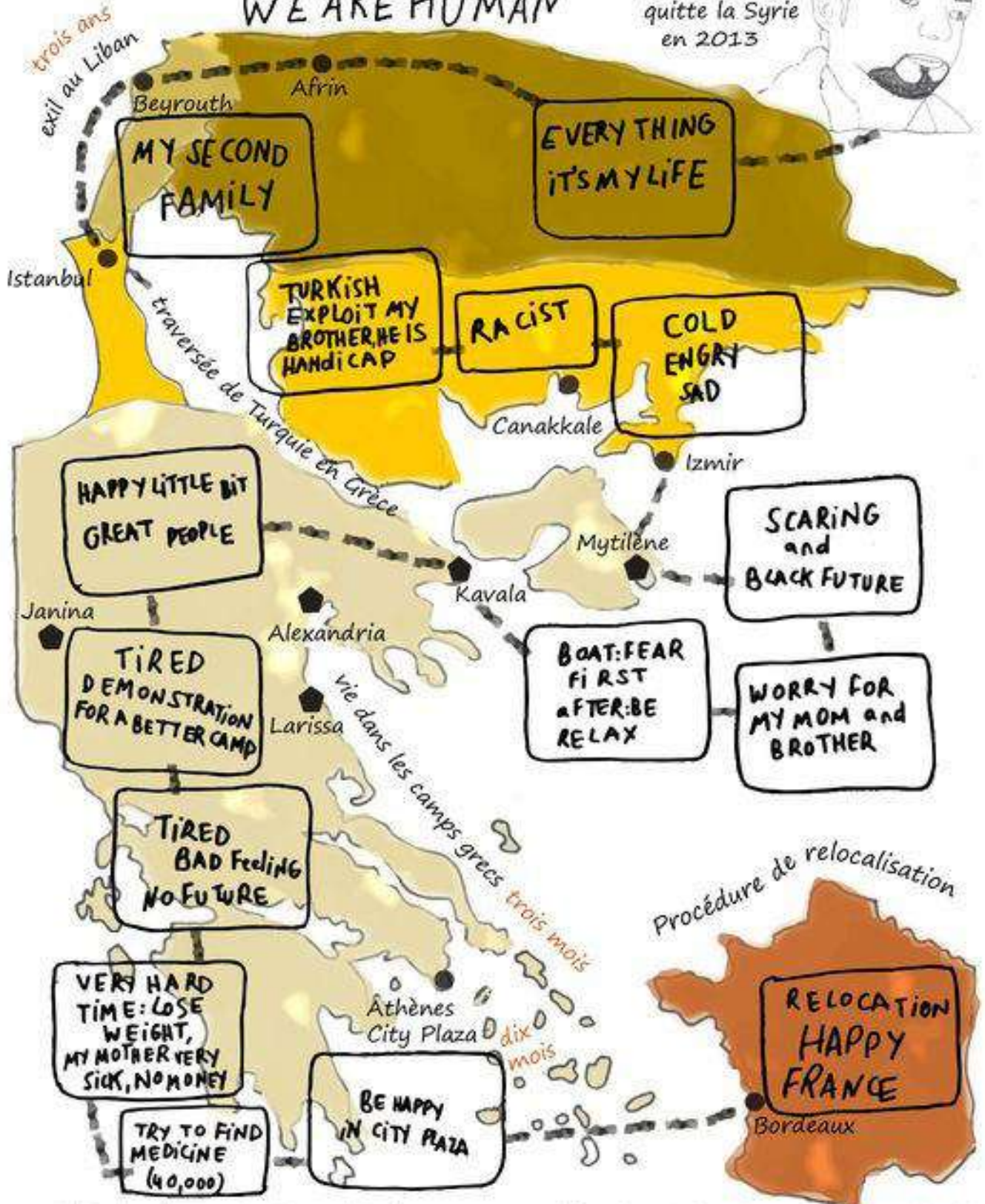
“MIGREUROP is a Euro-African network of associations, activists and researchers. The network strives to raise awareness of and to oppose policies that marginalise and exclude migrants, notably, detention in camps, various forms of displacement and the closure of borders, as well as the externalisation of migration controls by the European Union and its Member States. In this way, the network contributes to defending migrants’ fundamental rights and to promoting freedom of movement and settlement.” (Migreurop, 2022)

“‘We are not refugees, we are humans,’ summed up Mustafa at the end of a speech in which he patiently retraced the steps of his migratory journey at a cartographic workshop held at Athens’ City Plaza (a squat in a former hotel which lodges over 700 refugees). This veritable personal map gave a telling account of the physical and mental trials incurred in the journey, and brought to light, through the prism of feelings and memories, an experience of migration that has become a daily occurrence: departure, uncertain stages in the journey, fear, hard living conditions, sometimes the impossibility of finding something to eat or other ways of looking after yourself, racism in some countries, ... and the relief of arriving and being able to stay in France, where Mustafa has been since March 2017.” (Migreurop, 2017)

The value of this first map (Figure 1) lies particularly in its focus on the experiences and perceptions of the person during his journey. The spatial, geographical dimension is present but clearly subordinate to this social aspect, which is noticeable by the geographically incorrect representation of countries. By using his exact wording, Mustafa himself is able to tell his story. This integration of quotes in the map seems to be an added value for conveying the social dimension, as is the brief introduction of the person who is sharing his experiences.

# WE ARE NOT REFUGEES WE ARE HUMAN

Mustafa Hadj Rasheed  
38 ans  
Kurde syrien,  
né à Afrin,  
fleuriste,  
quitte la Syrie  
en 2013



Carte réalisée à Athènes au City Plaza en décembre 2016 par Mustafa Hadj Rasheed, Sarah Bachelierie et Sophie Clair.

Fig. 1 "Le parcours de Mustafa" in Migreurop Atlas des Migrants en Europe (Bachelierie & Clair, 2017).

B. Le corridor: avant, après, dedans, dehors - L. Bacon & M. Dujmovic (*Migreurop Atlas des Migrants en Europe*)

“The migration corridor that existed from September 2015 to March 2016 is shown in its most complete form. It is neither homogeneous nor linear and consists of different camps, modes of transport and rhythms. Although the corridor initially seems inescapable and hermetic, certain populations are excluded from it and spaces arise alongside the official routes. The maps drawn around the central map zoom in on three situations at the edge of the corridor: border interstices and an urban area on either side of the Balkans, where migrants move and are sometimes stopped. In the post-corridor situation depicted in the cartoon, travel conditions worsen and migration policies in the region become stricter after the closure of the Austrian ‘barricade’: transit camps become places of detention, informal settlements appear and the number of border obstacles preventing passage increase. Since then, people seeking asylum in the EU have been sent back to the Balkans under the EU’s Dublin III regulation, although they crossed it legally...” (Bacon & Dujmovic, 2017).

Although this second map (Figure 2) of MIGREUROP does not present the personal journey of one individual, it focuses on a corridor used by many asylum seekers on their way to Western Europe. So in contrast to the previous map, this map is not mainly aimed at conveying personal experiences of asylum seekers during their journey. The aim is rather to represent the geographical, political dimensions related to migration routes through the Balkans. It indicates the different types of borders, considering both constructed borders and political borders such as the previously mentioned Schengen Area. Furthermore, it provides information on the modes and shifts of transport as well as the types of camps along the route.

C. Crossing into Sudan – A. Moses  
(*The Journeys Project*)

The Journeys Project is an initiative of the Henry J. Leir Institute at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University (The Journeys Project, 2020). This project was created on the basis of hundreds of conversations in which interviewees shared their travel experiences. They talked about leaving home, financing the journey and survival strategies. Artist Moses illustrated these personal stories of displacement (The Journeys Project, 2021).

“Hercules, along with his friend Rose, is an Eritrean who risked his life to flee Eritrea to avoid the country’s military regime and its system of conscription and forced labor, which they described as inhumane. In Eritrea, military service is mandatory and even

after their service, Eritreans are mandated to work wherever the government assigns them, which may mean continued — seemingly endless — military or government service. Frustrated and wanting more security than the government allowed, Hercules and Rose had their eyes on leaving Eritrea. “If they catch you trying to cross to Ethiopia,” Rose said, “they shoot you automatically. So everybody goes to Sudan,” and that’s where they wanted to go. After making the risky decision to disclose their intentions to a Sudanese nomad they thought may be able to connect them to a smuggler, the pair’s journey immediately began. After twenty hours of walking and successfully evading the gunshots and police dogs, the smuggler decided he would not continue to guide Hercules and Rose on their journey. On their own now, they found a refugee camp with little to no humanitarian services where they shared a home with eighty people and were not permitted to leave freely under domestic law. Hercules stayed there for four months before receiving financial support from friends in Eritrea to pay for a smuggler out of the camp. He found farm work, but soon after starting, he was kidnapped and taken as a slave along with other Eritreans for ransom where he remained for two and half months before being released in Israel. Hercules worked in Israel on a visa he had to renew regularly until the Israeli government decided it would not keep Eritrean and Sudanese refugees. Hercules went to Rwanda then to Kampala in Uganda hoping to be permitted to work. Ultimately, he hired several smugglers to assist him to get to Sudan where he was routinely arrested by local police despite proper documents and held in detention until he paid the police for his release. His fear of leaving home and being extorted led him to then travel to Turkey where he lives now.” (The Journeys Project, 2021)

What is interesting about this visual journey (Figure 3) is that no geographical representation was used. The authors of the map present the personal experiences by means of storytelling. Specific events along the journey are further illustrated with drawings, so that the reader can better empathise with the specific situations the person has experienced.

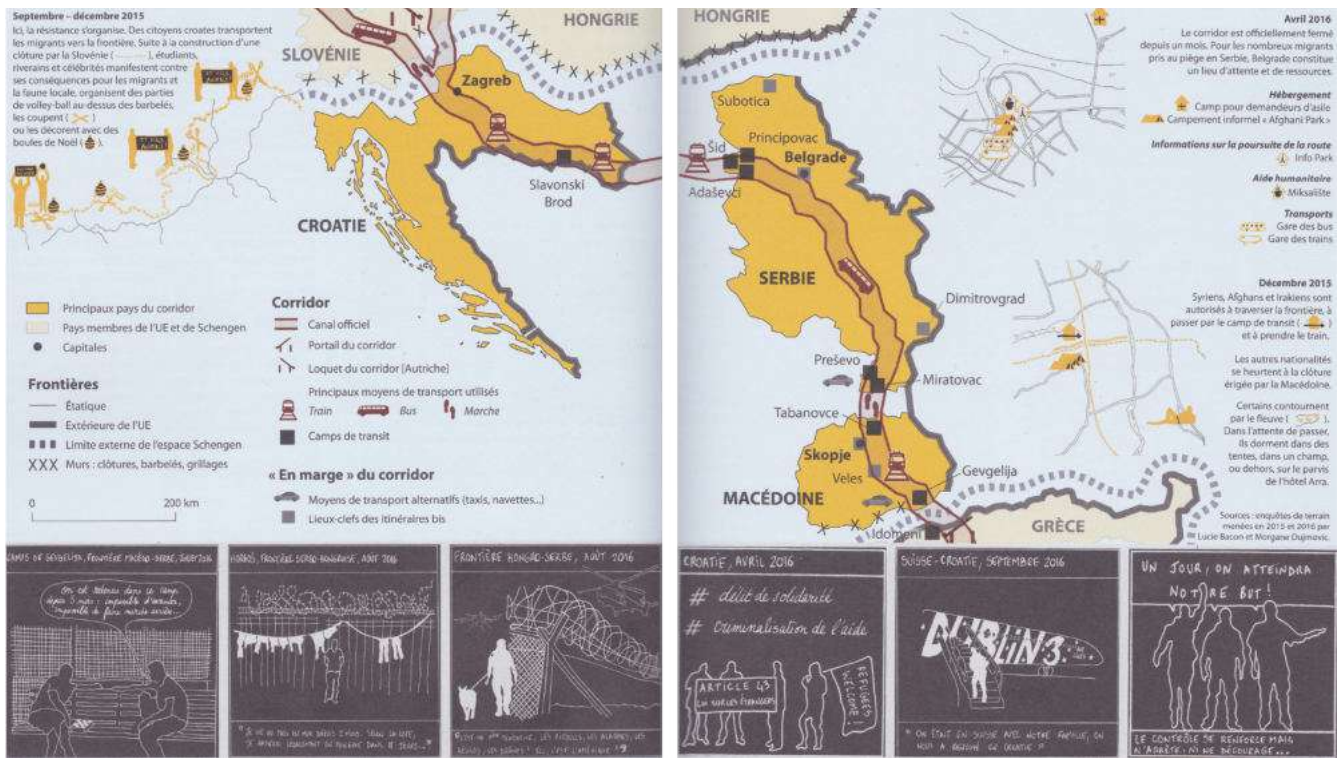


Fig. 2 "Le corridor: avant, après, dedans, dehors" in Migreurop Atlas des Migrants en Europe (Bacon & Dujmovic, 2017).

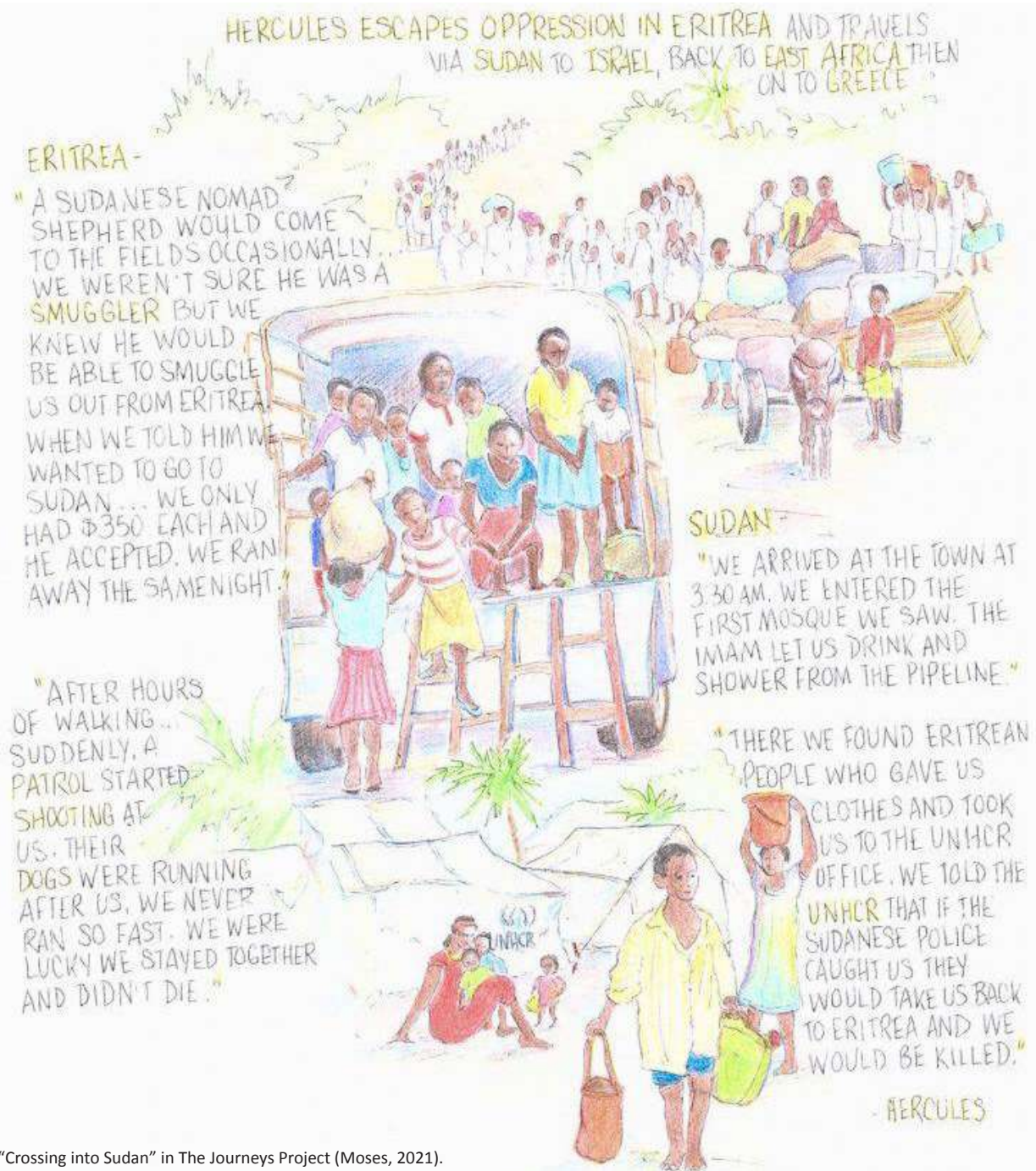


Fig. 3 "Crossing into Sudan" in The Journeys Project (Moses, 2021).



#### D. The Stories Behind a Line – F. Fragapane & A. Piacentini

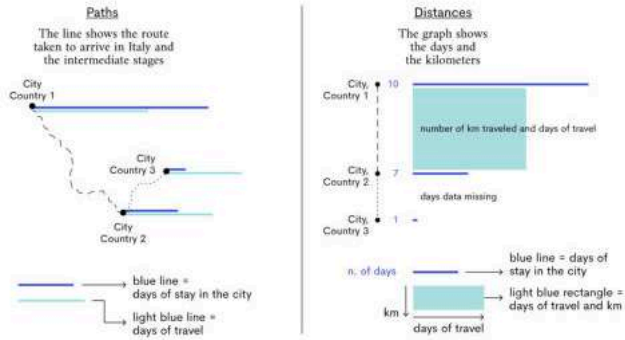
“The Stories Behind a Line” illustrates the individual journeys of six asylum seekers to Italy, based on quantitative data such as kilometres travelled, travel time and transports. These data and numbers reflect the dangers and difficulties of the journeys “lived by persons who are looking for a better life” (Fragapane & Piacentini, n.d.). Each individual journey is represented by a single line along which intermediate stages are indicated. The stages marked in red are accompanied by a short explanation of an event that took place there. With the help of the interface, the corresponding map and data can be made visible. The map adds the geographical context of the line, while the data gives an idea of the number of days of stay and days of travel. For the exact figures, the reader can consult the field “Distances”.

“M.D. left Guinea along with his brother after a demonstration against the government because of which many people were arrested. He stayed 1 month in Sebha working in order to earn enough money for the following trip. He arrived in Tripoli in a truck, hidden under some blankets with many other people. “They put us in the trucks as if we were objects. It was too hot and we couldn’t move because there were so many people”. When they arrived in Tripoli they were stopped by the police and got arrested. They stayed in jail, for 2 months and a week. Then he, his brother and two other people managed to escape. They worked as bricklayers for 5 months. He left Libya with his brother on June, because it was too dangerous. “In Libya it’s too dangerous. I can die everyday.” They took a small boat to arrive in Italy. After 8 hours of travel they met a ship whose crew helped them. His brother stayed in Rome, he was transferred to Settimo Torinese. M.D. arrived in Vercelli on August 1, 2016.” (Fragapane & Piacentini, n.d.)

As this last map (Figure 4) is designed around data and numbers, the individual’s personal experiences cannot be derived directly from the visual. However, certain events are explained in the text accompanying the intermediate stages. The modes of transport between these stages are visible through the use of different line styles. Furthermore, the figures on duration and distance provide the reader with accurate information. However, this information cannot be read directly from the map either.

## Initials, age Hometown, Country

total days of travel  
total travelled kilometers



### M.D., 27 years old Touba, Guinea

687 days  
9517 kilometers

He left Guinea along with his brother after a demonstration against the government because of which many people were arrested.



### M.D., 27 years old Sebha, Libya

687 days  
9517 kilometers

He stayed 1 month in Sebha working in order to earn enough money for the following trip.

[CLOSE DETAILS](#)

### M.D., 27 years old Touba, Guinea

687 days  
9517 kilometers

He left Guinea along with his brother after a demonstration against the government because of which many people were arrested.

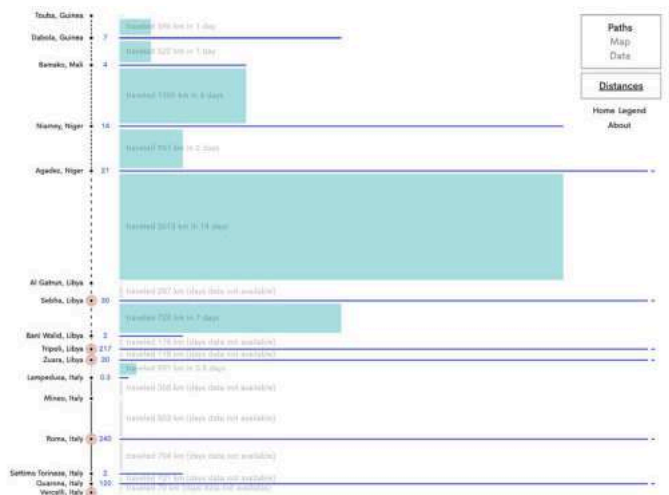
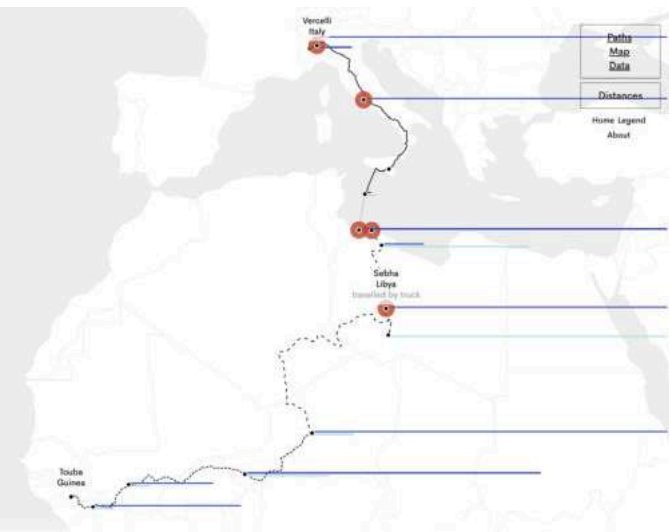
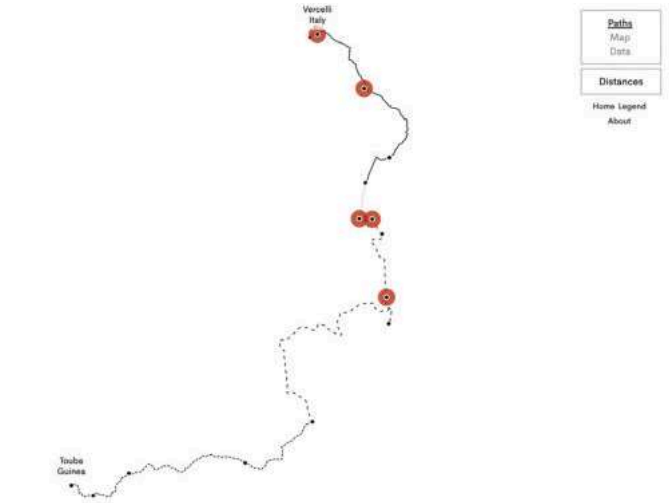
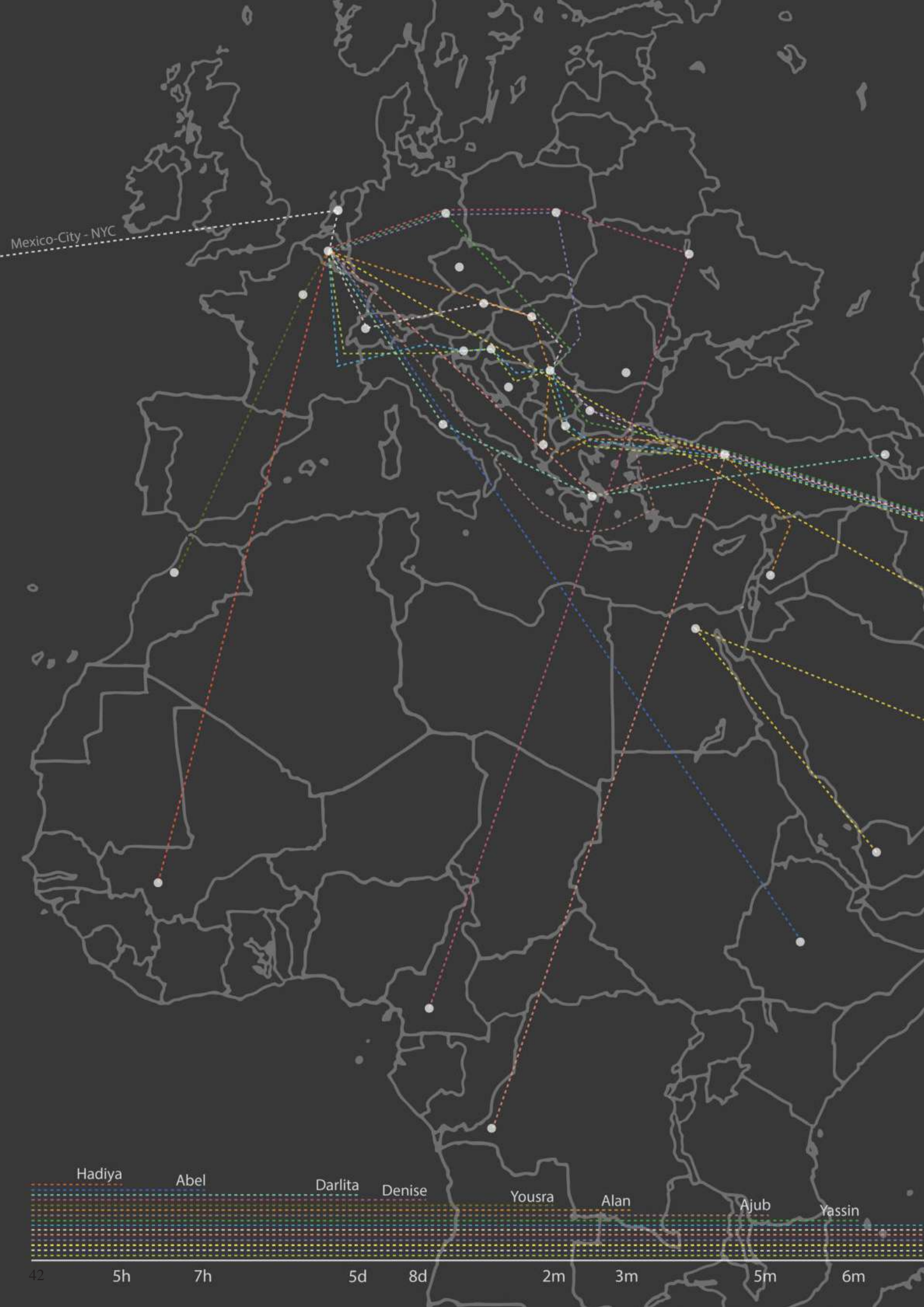
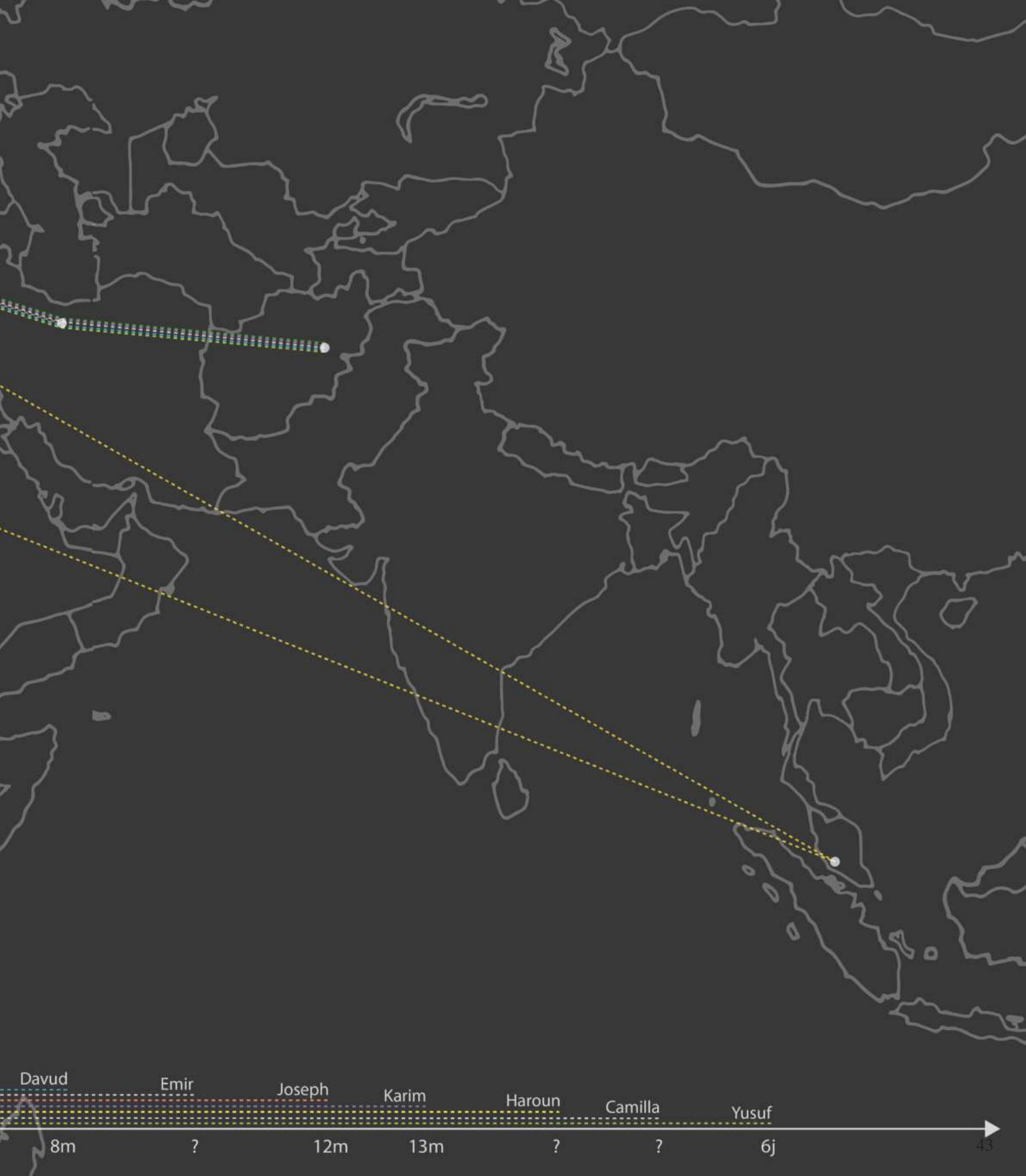


Fig. 4 Maps from "The Stories Behind a Line" (Fragapane & Piacentini, n.d.).



## 15 TRAJECTORIES OF DISPLACEMENT

This map represents the routes and the corresponding duration of the journeys of our 15 interviewees in Brussels. When the exact travel routes within the countries were not known, the capital cities were used as intermediate points in the map. Some of the asylum seekers reached Brussels with a single flight, while others crossed thousands of kilometres of land and water. On the following pages, one journey for each centre where interviews were conducted is explored in more detail. During the interviews the participants told their stories to the extent that they felt comfortable. Consequently, each representation contains a different level of detail.



BELGIUM

"NO ENGLAND,  
WANT TO STAY.  
BRUSSELS GOOD"



ITALY

"VERY DANGER  
VERY DANGER  
VERY DANGER!"

"HIGH WAVES, NO SLEEP"

"POLICE,  
CLOTHES RIPPED OFF"

GREECE

TURKEY

5 days

"MY GOAL IS BELGIUM"

IRAN



AJUB is 20 years old and comes from Iran. He is an unaccompanied minor who left Iran in 2021. This journey took him 5 months.

	BOAT		KNOWN ROUTE		UNKNOWN ROUTE		SCHENGEN		EU
	WALK		COUNTRY						
	VAN								
	BUILDING								



Ajubs journey started in Iran. With a group of 8 people, he walked through Turkey to reach Bulgaria or Greece. At the border however, they were beaten by the Greek police and were sent back to Turkey. At the coast, Ajub took a boat towards Italy, following the Eastern Mediterranean route. Those 5 days were the hardest part of the journey. Once he arrived, Ajub managed to jump in a van and slept throughout the entire ride to Brussels. After the registration in Klein Kasteeltje, Ajub was welcomed in the OOC of Oudergem.

BELGIUM



HAROUN is 30 years old and comes from Yemen. He is a student who arrived in Belgium in 2021. The duration of his journey is unknown.

	KNOWN ROUTE		UNKNOWN ROUTE
	COUNTRY		SCHENGEN
	EU		

"WAS DREAM TO COME HERE, CAN'T DESCRIBE HOW DIFFICULT"

"WHEN THERE WAS OPPORTUNITY TO COME TO BELGIUM, THREW EVERYTHING AND TOOK IT"



EGYPT



MALAYSIA



YEMEN

"FIRST I TRIED LEGAL WAY BUT I WAS REJECTED, SO I CHOSE THE ILLEGAL WAY"



Haroun is from Yemen. About his journey, however, we have no information regarding transport modes, accommodation types or durations. This is because he did not come to Belgium through the official channels, and therefore preferred not to disclose information on how he made the journey. He did say that he had planned to come in 2019, but that he eventually only managed to do so in 2021. First, he travelled to the East of Asia where he stayed for a while and studied in the meantime. But when he saw the opportunity to come to Belgium, he left everything behind. He stayed 4 days in Klein Kasteeltje. After that, he moved to Zaventem where he spends most of his time studying to finish his education.

**DENISE** is a 35 year old woman of Cameroonian origin. However, she had been living in Ukraine for the past 10 years when the Russo-Ukrainian war struck. After an 8-day journey she reached Belgium.



"POUR LA LANGUE"

BELGIUM



GERMANY



POLAND

"ENFIN LES PAYS SE SONT RÉVEILLÉS"



ALL PASSPORTS

POLSKA

"ILS M'ONT À PEINE CONSIDÉRÉE"

"NOUS PENSIONS QUE C'ÉTAIT COMME LE VENT, QUE ÇA ALLAIT PASSER"

UKRAINE

"J'AI JUSTE EU LE TEMPS DE PRENDRE MES DOCUMENTS ET MON DIPLÔME"

4-5 hours

	CAR		UNKNOWN ROUTE		SCHENGEN
	WALK		KNOWN ROUTE		EU
	BUS		COUNTRY		
	TRAIN				
	FOYER				

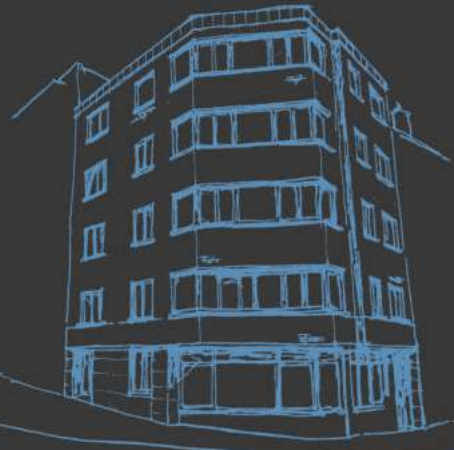
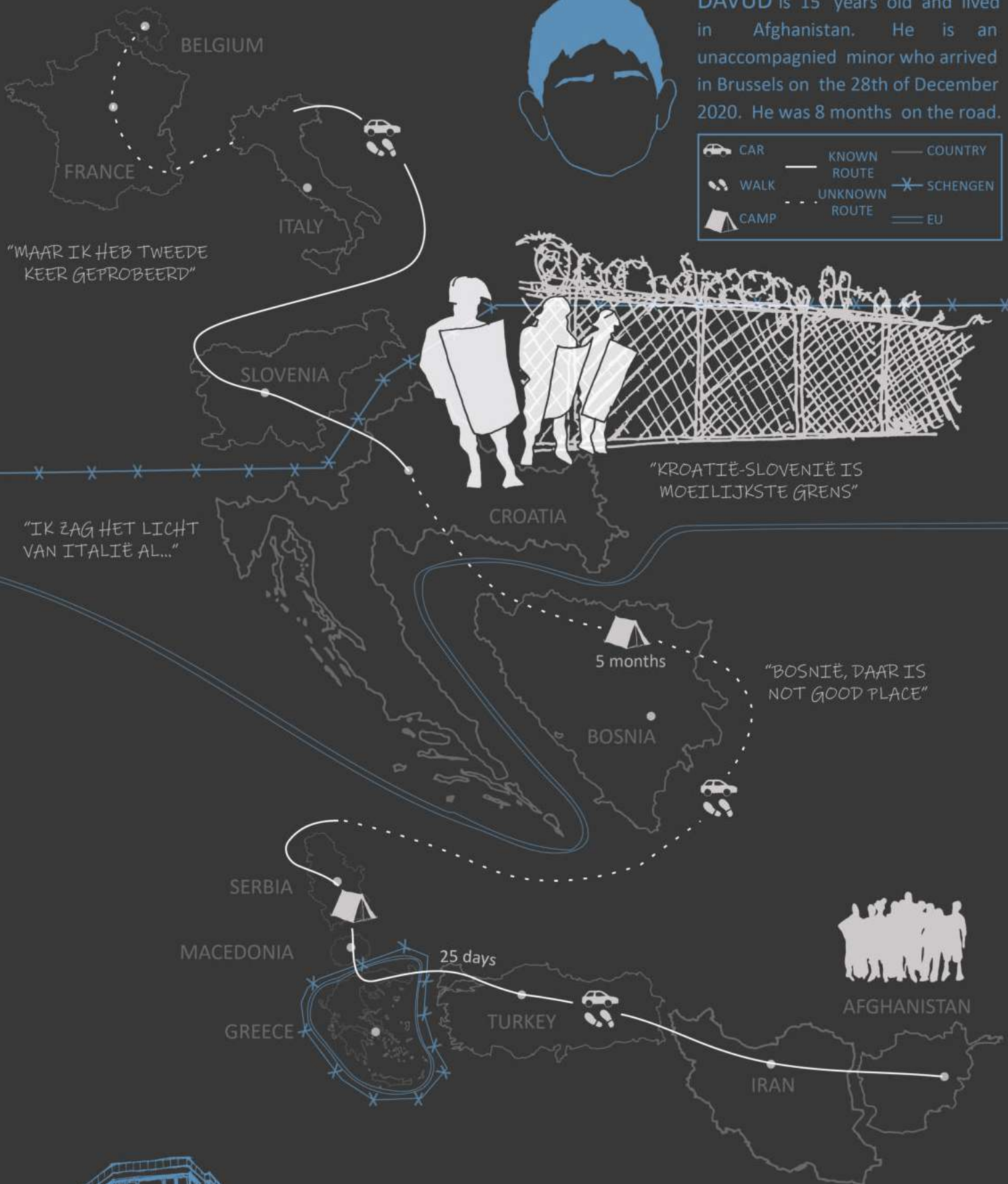
Denise had been living in Kiev for about 10 years when the conflict between Ukraine and Russia erupted. Initially, they believed it would subside, but it soon became clear that this was not the case. She barely had time to gather some things and collect her documents before they took the train to a different city. But the threat appeared also to be too significant there, so they decided to rent a car and face the huge traffic jams towards Lviv. At a certain point, cars could not pass through so they continued the journey towards Poland by foot, unaware that this would be another 25 km. Once at the border, it was already closed for the night. But also the next day, Denise had to wait until the night, because the Ukrainians were given priority, whereas on paper she has the Cameroonian nationality. Once in Poland, she was accommodated in a foyer for a few days. Then she continued her journey towards Brussels because of the French language.



DAVUD is 15 years old and lived in Afghanistan. He is an unaccompanied minor who arrived in Brussels on the 28th of December 2020. He was 8 months on the road.



	CAR		KNOWN ROUTE		UNKNOWN ROUTE		COUNTRY		SCHENGEN
	WALK		CAMP		EU				



The 15 years old Davud is the interviewee who has completed one of the longest routes. He also travelled in a group during the journey from Afghanistan to Ukkel, most of which he completed on foot, alternating with car transport. After 25 days of walking, he finally reached the border between Croatia and Slovenia. However, this border is also a Schengen border and includes physical barriers as well as police control. The police caught sight of him and sent him back to Bosnia, where he spent five months in a camp. Afterwards, he made a second attempt which was successful and he continued his journey towards Belgium. Once he arrived, Davud was hosted in an OOC, after which he was transferred to the Ukkel reception centre. Now he is waiting for an answer to his asylum application.



## Endnote Phase 0: The Road to Brussels

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## Figures

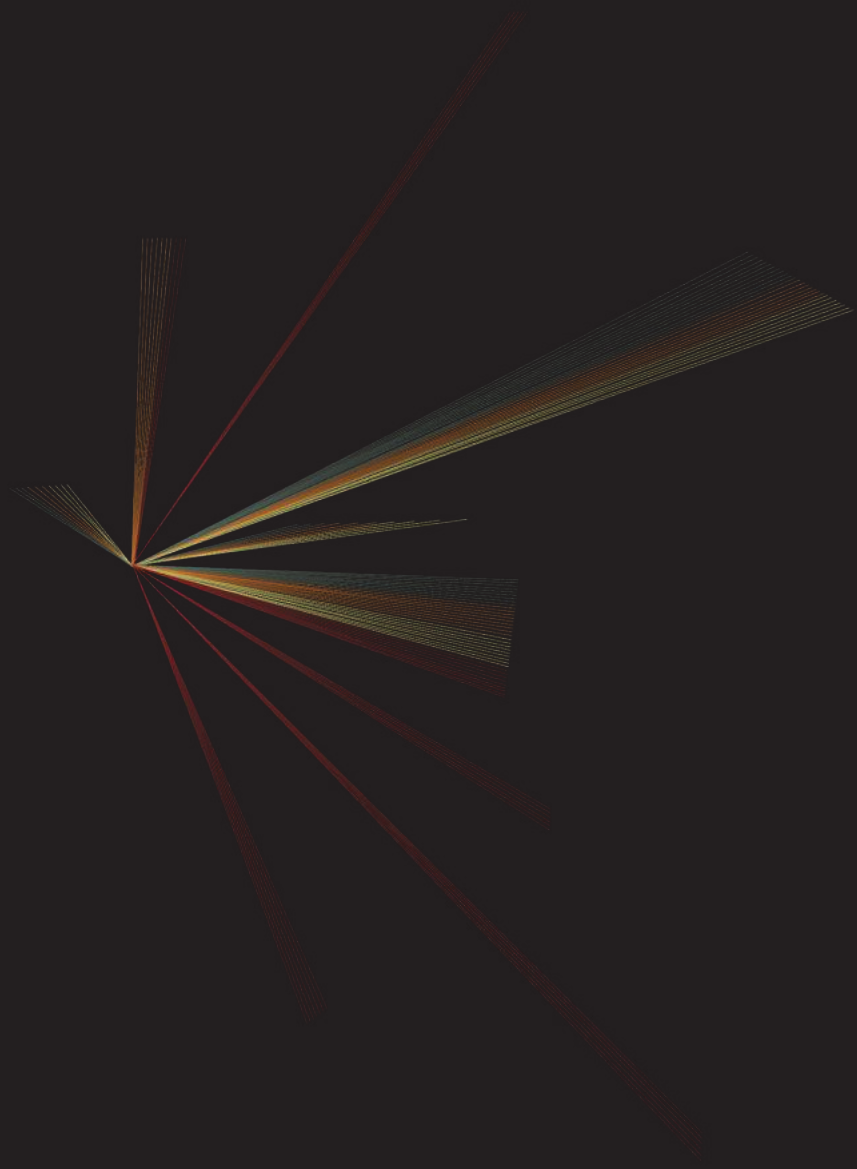
Fig. 1.: Bachellerie S., & Clair S. (2017). Le parcours de Mustafa. In Migreurop (Eds.), Atlas des Migrants en Europe. Approches critiques des politiques migratoires (pp. 103). Paris, Armand Colin.

Fig. 2.: Bacon L., & Duimovic M. (2017). Le corridor: avant, après, dedans, dehors. In Migreurop (Eds.), Atlas des Migrants en Europe. Approches critiques des politiques migratoires (pp. 66-67). Paris, Armand Colin.

Fig. 3.: Moses A. (2021, August 3). Drawing from "The Journeys Project [Picture]. <https://sites.tufts.edu/journeysproject/refugee-stories/>

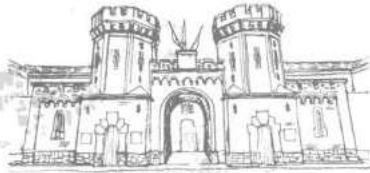
Fig. 4.: Fragapane F., & Piacentini A. (n.d.). Maps from "The Stories Behind a Line" [Screenshot]. <http://www.storiesbehindaline.com/>

PHASE 1&2:  
5 CASE STUDIES



## CASE 1: CITY OF BRUSSELS

Phase 1: Arrival Centre Klein Kasteeltje  
Fedasil



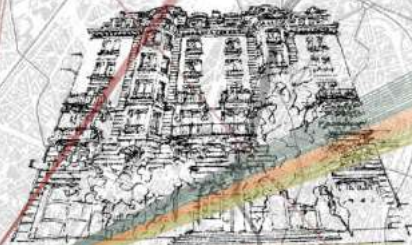
## CASE 2: OUDERGEM

Phase 1: OOC  
Fedasil



## CASE 3: ZAVENTEM

Phase 2: Reception Centre  
Fedasil



## CASE 4: JETTE

Phase 2: Reception Centre  
Red Cross



## CASE 5: UKKEL

Phase 2: Reception Centre  
Red Cross



- 1 line - 10 unaccompanied minors
- 10 single women
- 10 single men
- 10 family members

## THE BRUSSELS CENTRES: 5 CASE STUDIES

Belgium has over 80 reception centres for asylum seekers, accounting for about three quarters of the capacity of the total reception network. The other places are individual reception places, organised by OCMW's and NGOs (Fedasil, n.d.). This map represents the arrival and reception centres for people seeking international protection in Brussels, not including transit centres. It is based on the Fedasil overview map, consulted on January 1, 2022. Mixed reception facilities that also accommodate other social groups are not taken into account here. Furthermore, the reception centre in Zaventem was added to this overview because of its location within the Brussels ring road and its interest to participate in this study. The map also indicates the potential flows of asylum seekers between these centres, based on their capacity and target groups. However, the exact number of inhabitants of each target group is unknown, thus the number of the different coloured lines is random. Each asylum seeker must register at the arrival centre Klein Kasteeltje. There they will stay a few days or weeks before being transferred to a reception centre. Unaccompanied minors however, spend their first weeks in Belgium in an OOC instead of in Klein Kasteeltje so that they can be assisted more closely and a suitable reception centre can be found for them. After about a month in the OOC, the minors will also move to a reception centre. These can of course also be OOCs and reception centres outside of Brussels, but this study is focused on the Brussels centres.

The stay in arrival and reception centres is referred to as Phase 1 and Phase 2 respectively. The OOCs are also part of the first phase. Five of the centres in Brussels were explored in more detail with the help of fieldwork and interviews. The selection of these five centres resulted from their willingness to participate in this research. This chapter will elaborate on this spatial analysis for each centre. First the only arrival centre in Belgium, Klein Kasteeltje in the City of Brussels, is examined. Then the Observation and Orientation Centre in Oudergem will be discussed. Next, the reception centres of phase 2 are addressed. First the mixed centre in Zaventem, then the centre for women and unaccompanied girls in Jette and finally the reception centre for unaccompanied boys in Ukkel.

The spatial analysis is structured in three different scales: macro, meso and micro. Starting with the largest scale to provide the spatial context of each centre, and ending with spatial details and lived experiences of the bedrooms. In what follows, the concepts and approaches of each scale are outlined before going into the specific case studies.



## MACRO

At this and the following scale level, the places that contribute to the public life of cities are examined. The key concept on which “macro” and “meso” are based is the term “social infrastructure”. Alan Latham and Jack Layton (2019) state that a good city is a city that offers places where it is possible to make connections with other people. Earlier, sociologist Eric Klinenberg (2018) pointed out that a whole series of physical and institutional infrastructures are critical for developing and maintaining social connections, to counteract social isolation, to negotiate differences and to create places for all (Latham & Layton, 2019). They contribute to the social life of cities as they are “sites where strangers can meet and mix with others with whom they share their neighbourhoods and cities. More than just fulfilling an instrumental need, they are sites where cities can be experienced as inclusive and welcoming.” (Latham & Layton, 2019, pp. 2). Since social infrastructure offers certain qualities and opportunities, an unbalanced spatial distribution may also play a role in exclusion. Therefore, the macro-section examines the provision of and access to social infrastructure for the asylum seekers in the five reception centres. The “15-Minute City” was chosen as the scale of the research area. This is a concept, initially proposed in 2016 by Carlos Moreno, that re-emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic (Moreno et al., 2021). The concept refers to an urban planning based on proximity, seeking an optimal density that would have access to basic facilities within a 15-minute walk. This would reduce the time spent by residents travelling and thus increase the time for interaction with other members of the community (Moreno et al., 2021).

Klinenberg (2018) defines social infrastructure as follows:

*Public institutions, such as libraries, schools, playgrounds, parks, athletic fields, and swimming pools, are vital parts of the social infrastructure. So too are sidewalks, courtyards, community gardens, and other spaces that invite people into the public realm. Community organizations, including churches and civic associations, act as social infrastructures when they have an established physical space where people can assemble, as do regularly scheduled markets for food, furniture, clothing, art, and other consumer goods. Commercial establishments can also be important parts of the social infrastructure.*

Based on his work and research by other sociologists, anthropologists and geographers, Latham and Layton (2019) compiled a list in which social infrastructure is divided into five categories, giving a number of examples for each. “Public institutions” (1) are provided publicly and are designed as facilities for the general

public (Latham & Layton, 2019). A park is an example of this first category. Previous research has found that parks can have a significant role for supporting well-being and connection for asylum seekers. Parks can be places to socialise, to easily engage in free activities, and spending time outdoors can improve mental and physical health (Rishbeth et al., 2017). The second category of “commerce” (2) refers to infrastructures that operate commercially but have a public character (Bell, 2007). “Recreational activities” (3) represents places that facilitate particular kinds of activities, like sports. Finally, places of worship are covered by the category “religion” (4) and places related to mobility by “transit” (5) (Latham & Layton, 2019).

Based on the overview of Latham and Layton (2019) and with the help of interviews with residents and staff of the reception centres, the following list of social infrastructures was developed for the macro analysis. This is not an exhaustive list, but it does provide an idea of the different types of social infrastructure that are relevant in the context of asylum seekers living in reception centres. For example, laundrettes were not included as a subcategory of commerce as the centres provide this service. Furthermore, the choice was made to map primary and secondary schools for each centre, although not all five centres accommodate children and the children do not yet attend school during their stay in Klein Kasteeltje or an OOC. This allows the comparison of the provision of this subcategory for the five reception centres.

### (1) Public institutions:

libraries, museums, schools, squares and parks and forests

### (2) Commerce:

food shops, restaurants and hair salons and barbers

### (3) Recreational activities:

sports facilities and cinema and theatre

### (4) Religion

### (5) Transit:

bus stop, tram stop, metro station and train stations

The mapping of the social infrastructure was based on in-situ observations and data from Google Maps. With the help of specific keywords, the locations of the infrastructures were traced. The maps do not provide a complete overview by any means. The aim of the macro maps is to give an indication of the provision of social infrastructures in the surroundings of the reception centres, and to allow for comparison among them. In the analysis of the macro maps, attention is paid to

three of the six dimensions to the provision of social infrastructure addressed by Latham and Layton (2019). The first two are the “abundance” and the “diversity” of the social infrastructure. These can be immediately deduced from the map and the accompanying list of infrastructure that is arranged according to the different (sub)categories. The third dimension is “accessibility”. This involves the possible existence of certain barriers that prevent asylum seekers from accessing the infrastructure. Factors such as reachability, affordability and language barriers are taken into account here. As regards the reachability, the public transportation network (including directions) has been integrated into the macro map. This indicates which infrastructures can be reached by bus, tram and/or metro and which other municipalities can be reached. Concerning affordability, only the “restaurants” serving a dish that is affordable with the weekly pocket money of the residents of the reception centres were mapped. This differs for the different centres as they accommodate different target groups. For the other (sub)categories, however, it was not always possible to obtain information on this matter. Finally, the language barrier also plays a role in the daily life of asylum seekers. It is particularly prominent in education. Children who want to enrol in a school must first attend an OKAN class, which is a reception class for children with a different native language. Afterwards they can attend regular education. In primary education, each school can apply for extra hours to offer OKAN as soon as the demand is sufficiently high. In secondary education, however, only certain schools are designated as “OKAN schools” (Onderwijs Brussel, n.d.). There is not always an OKAN functioning in the vicinity of the reception centres and the places are limited, which means they sometimes also start in regular education (Grommen, 2022). Hence, not only the OKAN schools were indicated in the macro maps, but the entire school offer. The other three dimensions of social infrastructure identified by Latham and Layton (2019) will be discussed at the meso scale.

## MESO

Whereas the macro maps show the provision of social infrastructure within and around the “15-Minute City”, the meso scale seeks to give an impression of the places that the inhabitants of the reception centres actually desire or require. This is realised by zooming in on the infrastructures that some of the residents use in their day-to-day life. This information was obtained through interviews with residents and staff of the reception centres, and with the help of the centres’ social media. No interviews could be conducted at Klein Kasteeltje, because of the great workload on the arrival centre’s staff at the time of this study. Moreover, the majority of the residents interviewed in the other case-studies, with

the exception of the unaccompanied minors, have also stayed in Klein Kasteeltje during Phase 1, before being transferred to their respective current reception centres. Therefore, during the interviews in the reception centres of Zaventem and Jette, discussed later in this study, the residents were also asked to share their experiences in relation to their stay in this arrival centre.

At the beginning of each meso chapter, the profiles of the interviewees are briefly introduced. Due to anonymity reasons, each resident was assigned a fictive name by which they can be referred to throughout this study. The number of meso places considered depends on the comprehensiveness of the interviews and social media and therefore varies between case studies. Regarding the testimonies, the decision was made to use their exact wording for the authenticity of the information.

During the interviews, it appeared that the infrastructures used by the inhabitants of the reception centres are not limited to the places within the “15-Minute City”. With the help of public transport, presented in the macro maps, they also visit places in other municipalities, both inside and around Brussels. In the meso maps, the places are presented by means of a ground plan to illustrate the size, density and presence of vegetation. For optimal legibility, the scale of each plan was adjusted to the specific situation. The scale, the postal code of the municipality and the interviewees who used the place are mentioned for each ground plan. A second meso map with aerial photos gives an idea of the materiality. When analysing the meso maps, attention is paid to the other three of the six dimensions to the provision of social infrastructure that Latham and Layton (2019) address. Whether the infrastructure is “responsive” to the wants and needs of the research population of this study is inherent to the nature of the meso analysis. This scale discusses the places that are actually visited by asylum seekers and therefore to some extent meet their wants and/or needs. The ‘maintenance’ dimension is translated into a description of the spatial features of the meso places. Finally, some testimonies and/or observations are included in relation to how “democratic” these infrastructures really are.

Some of the meso places that are visited by the residents are related to activities, organised by the centre, that take place there. As the centre often works together with partners to allow for these activities, the reception centre’s network of partnerships was also mapped at the meso scale. The type of partnerships differs for each reception centre, and often relates to the target group residing in the centre. A brief description of the different organisations will be included in each case.



## MICRO

Finally, the micro section is devoted to the architecture and lived experiences of the reception centre. First the history of the building is introduced. Often, leftover buildings are given a new function as reception centres, though they are not technically qualified for this purpose without the required conversions and renovations. However, these renovations often do not take place because the owner and operator are different individuals or institutions. They have varying interests in the physical infrastructures, which often results in a lack of attention to the maintenance of the building, and a lack of interest to invest in the physical infrastructures (Thorshaug, 2019, pp. 207-228). The buildings of the five reception centres are all privately owned, with the exception of Klein Kasteeltje, which is owned by the Federal State.

Next, the organisation of the building will be explained using the floor plans. This provides the spatial framework for understanding the testimonies on life in the reception centre. The lived experiences of the residents are central to the micro analysis: how is the centre experienced and used by its inhabitants? Both the collective and private spaces are examined, although one might question the extent to which the private sphere is present in reception centres where even the bedroom is shared with strangers. Not only the spatial framework, but also institutional regulations impose restrictions on the everyday life of asylum seekers (Thorshaug, 2019). Both Fedasil and the Red Cross have drawn up house rules to promote cohabitation in the centres. Although the five case studies are all open centres, and thus in theory the residents are free to come and go as they please, they must respect the imposed house rules. This includes asking permission to sleep outside the centre for more than three consecutive nights and mandatory attendance at certain events such as information sessions (Thorshaug, 2019; Fedasil, n.d.).

A selection of photographs that were taken during the visits to the centres is used to give an impression of the furnishings and atmosphere of the centre. For the bedrooms, however, for privacy reasons a different medium was required. Therefore, a drawing of the bedrooms is made based on testimonies and/or observations. To reveal the lived experiences of its inhabitants, the different elements that appear in the sketch are accompanied by a quote or remark. As for the meso scale, the decision was made to keep their exact wording for the authenticity of the information.

## Endnote The Brussels Centres: 5 Case Studies

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**CASE 1: KLEIN KASTEELTJE**

ARRIVAL CENTRE

In December 2018, the oldest and largest reception centre for asylum seekers in Belgium was transformed into the only national arrival centre. Fedasil's Info Point, the Dispatching and the Immigration Office also moved there. Various activities are carried out at Klein Kasteeltje: identifying the applicant, medical screening, evaluating the right to material assistance and reception, allocating the applicant to a suitable reception structure, etc. (Fedasil, n.d.). Klein Kasteeltje is a temporary solution, the plan is to move to a permanent arrival centre on the site of the Koningin Astrid Military Hospital in Neder-over-Heembeek (Regie der Gebouwen, 2019).



**Type:** arrival centre

**Foundation:** 2018

**Architect:** M.-B. Meyers, P.V. Jamaer & others

**Owner:** Federal state

**Scale:** 6950m<sup>2</sup> x 4 floors

**Surroundings:** urban area

**Previous function:** reception centre

**Staff:**



**Volunteers:**



**Inhabitants:**

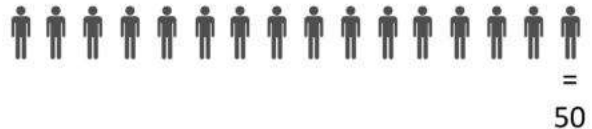


Fig. 1 Courtyard of Klein Kasteeltje (Fedasil, 2013).



Fig. 2 "Macro" image: Klein Kasteeltje is located along the Brussels canal (Canal Brussels, n.d.).



Fig. 3 "Meso" image: the Grote Markt is just outside the 15-Minute City of Klein Kasteeltje (Wikipedia, 2021).



Fig. 4 "Micro" image: around 8 am the first asylum seekers are welcomed here.

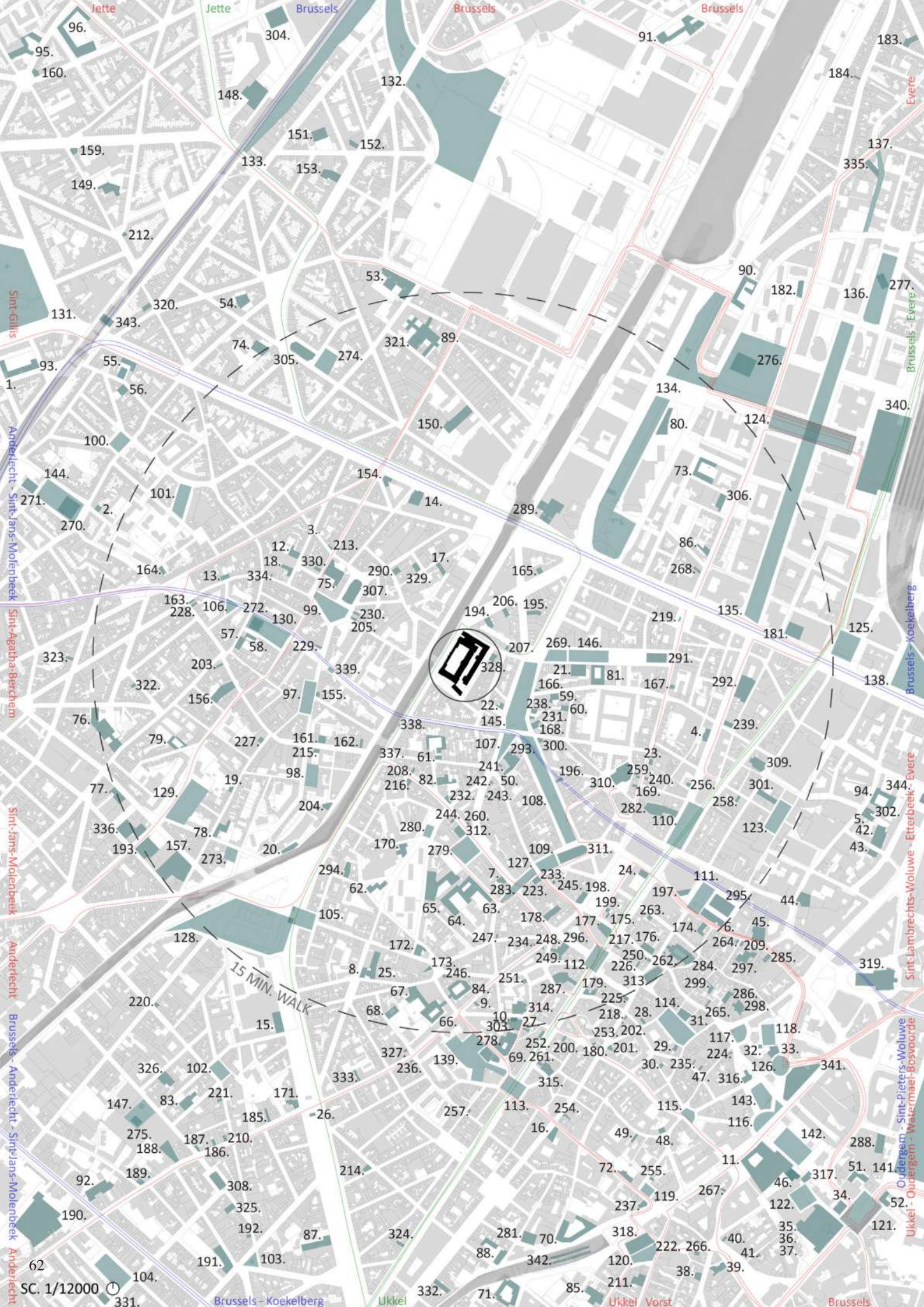
## MACRO

The macro map of Klein Kasteeltje (pp. 62-65) features some 350 social infrastructures. This enormous number is a consequence of the arrival centre's location within the Brussels Pentagon, the historic city centre of Brussels. As a result, the range of cultural and commercial activities is very extensive. Similarly, in Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, west of the Pentagon, a lot of social infrastructures can be observed. The Migration Museum MMM [17] is located on this side of the Brussels canal as well. Following the overview of libraries and museums, the list of education facilities [53-96] that are present in and around the 15-Minute City is also very large. Furthermore, even an OKAN school is accessible within the Pentagon, Institute Anneessens-Funck [69], receiving minors from various reception centres in Brussels. However, it should be noted that residents in Klein Kasteeltje do not yet attend school during this short stay.

The bustling character of city life in our capital is prominent in the most public spaces such as the many parks [128-147] and squares [97-127]. Being situated in the inner city, these parks are relatively limited in size. In the districts surrounding the Pentagon, they are larger in scale, such as Maximiliaanpark [134] or the park of Thurn & Taxis [132], located north of the arrival centre. In these northern districts, the urban tissue is more coarse and there are fewer social infrastructures.

In addition to parks, urban plazas also stimulate social gatherings throughout the city. Sometimes they are popular among tourists as well, such as the Grote Markt [114]. Since the historical city centre of the Belgian capital is part of the research area, tourist activities can occasionally be found in the other (sub) categories as well. Examples are the many museums [17-52], theaters [282-303], restaurants [215-237], etc. However, only restaurants affordable for the residents using their limited weekly pocket money (€3.10) are shown in the macro map of Klein Kasteeltje. As a result, they are often limited to snack bars, but they do enjoy a wide variety of food shops [148-214].

On the macro map, it can also be noted that there is an extensive public transport network. Bus, tram, metro and train are all available means of transport present in the research area. The bus, tram and metro stops are within a 5 minute walking distance from the arrival centre. The directions of the different transport lines can be found at the edge of the map. To reach a train station, residents must walk for more than 15 minutes. However, the extent to which they are able to use this means of transport seems limited given that ticket prices are high relative to their pocket money.



15 MIN. WALK

## PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

### Libraries

- 
1. Boekelberg
  2. Bibliotheek
  3. Openbare Bib. S.-J.-Molenbeek
  4. Franstalige Bib. C. Janssen
  5. Luisterpuntbibliotheek
  6. Muntpunt
  7. MoBo
  8. RoSa-vzw
  9. Bibliothèque Islamique
  10. Rijkeklaren Bibliotheek
  11. Koninklijke Bib. van België
  12. Bibliothèque ZEP
  13. Bibliothèque Francophone
  14. Espace 27 septembre
  15. Bib. des métiers d'art
  16. Library Artistic

### Museums

- 
17. MMM Migratie Museum
  18. Gem. Museum S.-J.-Molenbeek
  19. La Fonderie asbl
  20. MIMA
  21. AMVB - Archief en Museum
  22. Street Art
  23. Museum van de Vrijmetselarij
  24. Magritte Gallery
  25. Vanhaerents Art Collection
  26. Riolenmuseum
  27. Graffiti
  28. Museum of Cocoa and Chocolate
  29. Belgische Brouwers Museum
  30. Museum Kostuum en Kant
  31. Museum van de Stad Brussel
  32. Galerie Horta
  33. Moof Comic's Museum
  34. Musée Magritte Museum
  35. Old Masters Museum
  36. Kon. Musea voor Schone Kunsten
  37. Fin-de-sièclemuseum
  38. Joods Museum van België
  39. Balthasar Brussels
  40. Sablon d'Art
  41. Museum Erotiek en Mythologie
  42. Belgisch Stripcentrum
  43. Marc Sleen Museum
  44. Museum van de Nationale Bank
  45. Espace Vanderborght
  46. KBR Museum
  47. Illusion Brussels
  48. Fondation Jacques Brel
  49. Garde Robe Manneken Pis
  50. Alice Gallery
  51. MIM
  52. Belvue Museum

### Schools

- 
53. Imelda Instituut
  54. Sint-Jozefschool BuBaO
  55. Inst. van de Ursulinen
  56. Basissch. De Kadeekes

- 
57. Vier Winden basissch.
  58. Ecole Sainte Ursule
  59. GO! Basissch. Kleurdoos
  60. Onderwijscentrum
  61. Scholengem. Sas
  62. Thomas van Aquino
  63. Maria-Boodschaplyceum
  64. Atheneum Brussel
  65. Institut de Mot-Couvreur
  66. Ecole Jardin aux fleurs
  67. Ecole Enfant Jesus
  68. Ecole Christian Merveille
  69. Inst. Anneessens-Funck
  70. S.-J.-Berchmanscollege
  71. Charles Gheude
  72. Sint-Jorisbasissch.
  73. Ecole de l'Héliport
  74. Ecole Saint-Joseph
  75. Franst. gem. basissch.
  76. GBS Windroos
  77. Ecole la Plume
  78. La cité des enfants
  79. GO! Basissch. Klimpaal
  80. Ecoles Libres S.-Roch
  81. Inst. Bichoffsheim
  82. La Clé des Champs
  83. Les Tourterelles
  84. School Six-Jetons
  85. Dachsbeck basissch.
  86. La Fraternité S.-Vincent
  87. Matteo Riccicollege
  88. S.-J.-Berchmanscoll. basis
  89. Municipal prim. sch. 2
  90. 't Klavertjevier
  91. Franstalig Atheneum M.Y.
  92. Gem. Basissch. Kameleon
  93. Atheneum Comenius
  94. Athenee Royal G. de G.
  95. School Vanhelfmont
  96. Franst. Atheneum Jette

### Squares

- 
97. Place Com. Molenbeek
  98. Plein
  99. S.-J.-Baptistvoorplein
  100. Pl. Heri Vanhuffel
  101. Square Noville
  102. Alphonse Lemmensplein
  103. R. Pequeursquare
  104. Clemenceau square
  105. Ninoofseplein
  106. Voltaireplein
  107. Varkensmarkt
  108. Vismarkt
  109. Sint-Katelijneplein
  110. Place de Brouckère
  111. Muntplein
  112. Beursplein
  113. Fontainas Plein
  114. Grote Markt
  115. Sint-Jansplein
  116. Albertinaplein
  117. Grasmarkt

- 
118. Spanjeplein
  119. Dinantplein
  120. Kapellemarkt
  121. Koningsplein
  122. Museumplein
  123. Martelaarsplein
  124. Simon Bolivarplein
  125. Rogierplein
  126. Europakruispunt
  127. Oude Graanmarkt

### Parks and forests

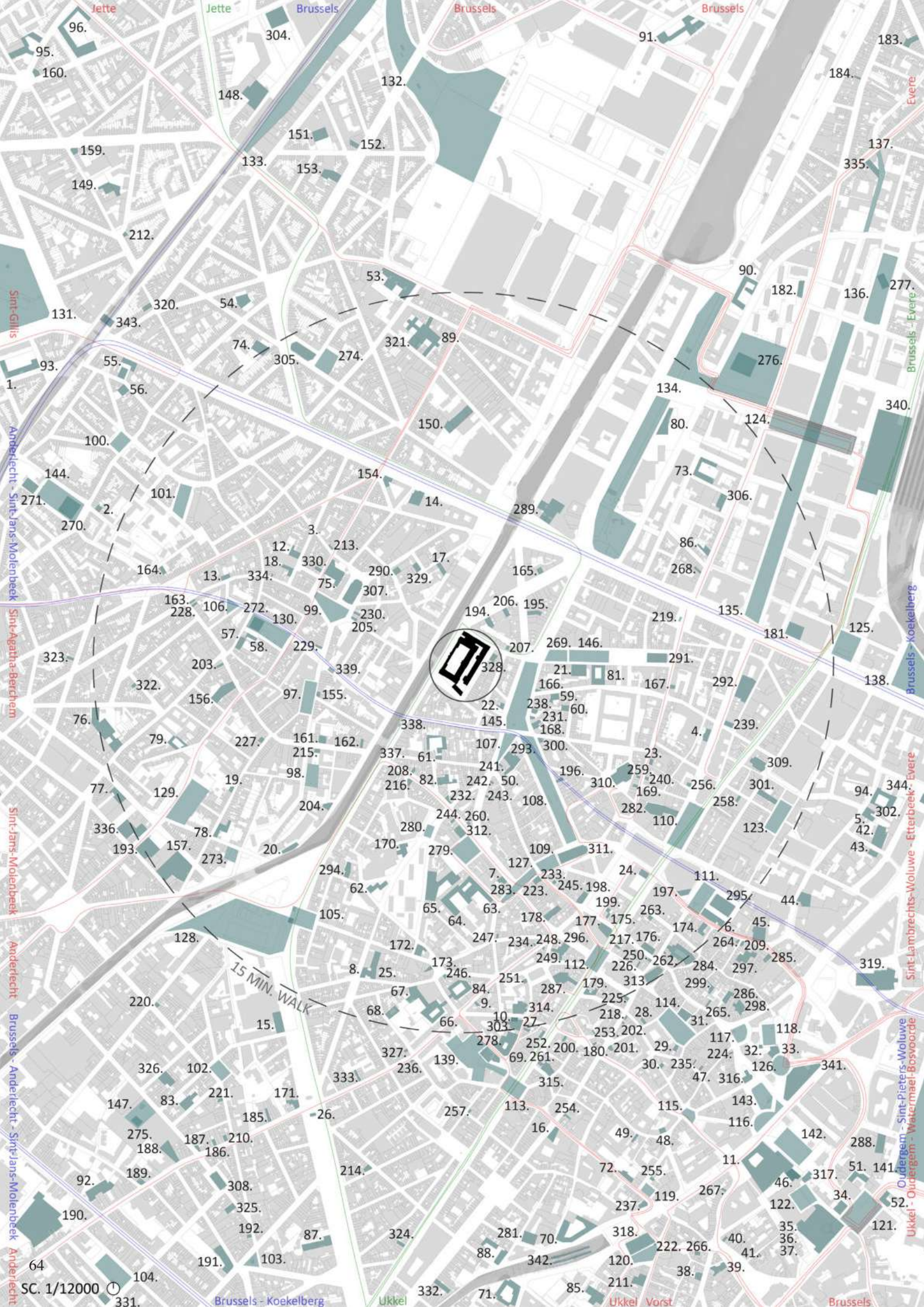
- 
128. Ninoofsepoortpark
  129. Fonderiepark
  130. Bonneviepark
  131. Elisabethpark
  132. Thurn & Taxis
  133. Park van Lijn 28
  134. Maximiliaanpark
  135. Koning Albert II Laan
  136. Gaucheretpark
  137. Het Zennepark
  138. Kruidtuin
  139. Fontainaspark
  140. Kleine Zavelsquare
  141. Warandepark
  142. Tuin van de Kunstberg
  143. Putterijsquare
  144. Park Victoria
  145. Marguerite Duras
  146. Arduinkaai
  147. Liverpoolplein

## COMMERCE

### Food shops

- 
148. Delhaize C. Woeste
  149. OKay Jette
  150. Aldi
  151. Lidl
  152. Romarket
  153. Sofabel 2
  154. Carrefour express L. II
  155. Aziatische kruidenier
  156. Tanger Marche
  157. Lidl
  158. Kaya Market
  159. Tony Jerry - Chez Laura
  160. Carrefour express O. W.
  161. Indiase kruidenier
  162. Krinimaji
  163. Epicerie
  164. Bij BB
  165. Proxy Delhaize
  166. Voedingswarenwinkel
  167. Market-City
  168. Carrefour express
  169. Alimentation Generale
  170. Okay Compact
  171. Supermarkt Marjan
  172. Proxy Delhaize
  173. Tsavalopoulos
  174. Shop&Go Delhaize S.





15 MIN. WALK

SC. 1/12000

Jette  
Brussels  
Sint-Gillis  
Anderlecht - Sint-Jans-Molenbeek  
Sint-Agatha-Berchem  
Sint-Jans-Molenbeek  
Anderlecht  
Brussels - Anderlecht - Sint-Jans-Molenbeek  
Anderlecht  
Brussels - Koekelberg  
Ukkel  
Ukkel Vorst  
Brussels  
Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe - Etterbeek - Evere  
Sint-Pieters-Woluwe  
Oudergem - Sint-Pieters-Woluwe  
Ukkel - Oudergem - Watermael-Bosvoorde

- 175. Chen Yuefang
- 176. Carrefour market
- 177. AD Anspach
- 178. Delhaize Fresh Atelier
- 179. Carrefour express Beurs
- 180. Centre City
- 181. Proxy Manhattan
- 182. Brussels Market
- 183. Lidl
- 184. Mini Market Ali Baba
- 185. Sami Market
- 186. Aswak Damas
- 187. Al Zaeim
- 188. Aswak Souss
- 189. Tayba Trading
- 190. Foodmet
- 191. Louis Delhaize Anderlecht T.
- 192. Iqbal Traders
- 193. Nas sprl
- 194. Mohamed Food
- 195. M.T.M. sprl
- 196. Färm
- 197. Carrefour market
- 198. Kam Yuen
- 199. Wang Li
- 200. El Baraka
- 201. Midi Corner
- 202. Ket - Micromarket
- 203. Day Shop
- 204. The Food Hub
- 205. Atlas Shop
- 206. Adel Food sprl
- 207. Azouz
- 208. Dansaert Food sprl
- 209. Night shop
- 210. El Lakkis Ali
- 211. Lidl
- 212. Kruidenierszaak
- 213. Karalarmarkt
- 214. Chez Amar

#### Restaurants [< € 3,1]

- 215. Noisette Halal
- 216. Chilli Grill
- 217. Sultans of Kebap
- 218. Mannekes Frites
- 219. Frituur Tabora
- 220. Frituur Heyvaart
- 221. Anderlechtse frituur
- 222. Frituur de la Chapelle
- 223. Fritkot Chouke
- 224. Belgian Frites
- 225. Fritland
- 226. Patatak
- 227. Snack Taspil
- 228. Snack Al Hayat
- 229. Snack Damla
- 230. Snack diamant Vert
- 231. Le Snack à Pat
- 232. Midi Minuit
- 233. Kebab & Grill
- 234. Snack Bread'In
- 235. Snack Athènes
- 236. Snack Papillon

- 237. Snack Aime

#### Hair salons and barbers

- 238. Savagan Brussel
- 239. Enzo
- 240. Al Barbero
- 241. L'hair qui décoiffe
- 242. Kavak
- 243. Fab-Ken Hair
- 244. Mimske Barbershop
- 245. De Kwaf
- 246. Mjlo Coiffure
- 247. Boombahairdesign
- 248. Michel hair fashion
- 249. Coiffure Nary
- 250. Full Look
- 251. Bxl Kapper
- 252. Kapsalon Centrum
- 253. Eaucontreair
- 254. Lazaar
- 255. De Wakko Kapper
- 256. J.S.C. Coiffure
- 257. Kapsalon Africa
- 258. Raphaëli's Coiffure
- 259. Coiffure Tonino
- 260. Les Mille et une Coupes
- 261. Coiffure Anspach
- 262. Maison Celini
- 263. Avenida Brasil
- 264. Coiffeur Messieurs M.
- 265. Dessange
- 266. Bayer&Bayer
- 267. Atelier Barbière
- 268. Cool Barber Yser

#### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

##### Sports facilities

- 269. Arduinkaai
- 270. Park Victoria
- 271. Sport centrum V.
- 272. Bonneviepark
- 273. Henegouwenkaai
- 274. Karavane
- 275. Liverpoolplein
- 276. Maximiliaanpark
- 277. Gaucheretruimte
- 278. Omnisport Z.
- 279. Terrain Mehdi Bouda
- 280. Jacques Brelsquare
- 281. Salle Omnisport

##### Cinema and theatre

- 282. UGC
- 283. Cinema RITCS
- 284. Cinéma Aventure
- 285. Nova
- 286. Cinema Galeries
- 287. Palace
- 288. Cinematek
- 289. Kaaitheater
- 290. Ras El Hanout
- 291. Kon. Vl. Schouwburg

- 292. Theater Franst. Gem.
- 293. Bronks
- 294. Kaaistudio's
- 295. De Munt
- 296. Beursschouwburg
- 297. Theatre Royal des G.
- 298. Vaudeville theater
- 299. Théâtre Royal de T.
- 300. Le Jardin de ma Soeur
- 301. Théâtre des Martyrs
- 302. The Magic Mountain
- 303. Les Riches-Clares

#### RELIGION

- 304. Int. Kerk van Brussel
- 305. Sint-Remigiuskerk
- 306. Sint-Rochuskerk
- 307. Sint-Jan Baptistkerk
- 308. O.-L.-V.-O. Ontvangenkerk
- 309. O.-L.-V. van Finisterraekerkerk
- 310. Begijnhofkerk
- 311. Sint-Katelijnekerk
- 312. Protestantse Kerk
- 313. Sint-Niklaaskerk
- 314. O.-L.-V.-ter-Rijke-Klaren
- 315. O.-L.-V. Goede Bijstand
- 316. S.-Maria-Magdalena
- 317. Protestantse Kerk
- 318. O.-L.-V. ter Kapelle
- 319. S.-M. en S.-G. kathedraal
- 320. Mosquée Annasr
- 321. Moskee Arafat
- 322. Al Imrane
- 323. Attadamoun
- 324. Al Jadid
- 325. Rida Moskee
- 326. Aim El Fath
- 327. Pakistaans Islam. Centrum
- 328. Omar Ben Khatab
- 329. Pakistaans Islam. Centrum
- 330. Moskee Mouslimine
- 331. Isr. Orth. Synagogue
- 332. Beth Israel
- 333. Chua Hoa boeddh. tempel
- 334. Moskee Al Moutaquine
- 335. Moskee Ulu Camii
- 336. Al Khalil

#### TRANSIT

- A. Bus direction
- 337. Bus stop Vlaamsepoort
- B. Tram direction
- 338. Tram stop Vlaamsepoort
- C. Metro direction
- 339. Metro station Graaf v. V.
- D. Train
- 340. Train station Br. North
- 341. Train station Br. Centraal
- 342. Train station Br. Kap. Kerk
- 343. Train station Simonis
- 344. Train station Br. Congres

No interviews could be conducted at the Klein Kasteeltje arrival centre, because of the great workload on the arrival centre's staff at the time of this study. Moreover, the majority of the residents interviewed in the other case-studies, with the exception of the unaccompanied minors, have also stayed in Klein Kasteeltje during Phase 1, before being transferred to their respective current reception centres. Therefore, during the interviews in the reception centres of Zaventem and Jette, discussed later in this study, the residents were also asked to share their experiences in relation to their stay in this arrival centre. In addition to those interviews, observations during the visit at Klein Kasteeltje on the 21st of December 2021, and accompanying explanations by M. Meirlaen, provided the basis for the meso and micro analysis of Klein Kasteeltje.

### The interviewees

Haroun, Abel and Darlita, currently living in the reception centre of Zaventem, and two residents at the women's reception centre in Jette, called Yousra and Denise, shared their experiences on Klein Kasteeltje. The interviews in Zaventem and Jette took place on the 25th of February and the 1st of May in 2022, respectively. As the profiles of the interviewees will be explained in more detail within the context of their current reception centre, the residents are only briefly introduced here. Student Haroun from Yemen and former teacher Abel from Ethiopia, both men in their thirties, had stayed in the single men's wing of Klein Kasteeltje. The third interviewee from Zaventem, called Darlita, was assigned a family room with her husband and daughter after their journey from Armenia. Until 2019, she had already been living in Brussels with her parents for years, before the Armenian returned to her country of birth to get married. Currently living in Jette, the 23-year-old Yousra originates from Morocco and spent two months in a single women's room at Klein Kasteeltje, in the beginning of her asylum application procedure. Finally Denise, originally from the Republic of Cameroon, arrived in Brussels in March 2022 fleeing from the Russo-Ukrainian war after having lived in Ukraine for almost ten years. The 35-year-old woman also stayed in the single women's wing in the arrival centre.

### The map

The meso map of Klein Kasteeltje (pp. 68-69) was created on the basis of the five conversations with the above-mentioned persons, respectively. As examined in the macro-analysis, this area of Brussels offers a great number of social infrastructures. However, in comparison to the meso maps of the other four case-studies, the meso map of Klein Kasteeltje contains only a limited number of sites frequented by the residents.

M. Meirlaen explained: "Velen bevinden zich nog in een post-traumatische fase. Ze blijven liever op hun kamer." (M. Meirlaen, personal communication, December 21, 2021). Some of the residents at the arrival centre have just completed a long and sometimes traumatic journey. This was also the case for Denise, currently residing in Jette: "Je ne suis pas sortie, pas dans mon état" (Denise, personal communication, May 1, 2022). The Ukrainian preferred to stay in the courtyard of Klein Kasteeltje, to socialise with the Cameroonian community. Abel also experienced this stay as a difficult time. However, he appreciated the location close to the city as he could stroll around in the shopping streets. No other places were visited by Abel as he did not know his way around. In turn, Haroun only mentioned one meso-place that seemed important to him during his stay at Klein Kasteeltje, namely the ice-cream shop Gaston [1], which is located only a few streets from the arrival centre.

Not all interviewees had the same experiences during their journey towards Brussels, nor do they all deal with their situation in the same way. Apparently, some residents do want to explore the city to discover new places. Naturally, the ones who stay in the arrival centre for a longer time, are also more likely to take part in activities organised by the staff, and to discover a greater deal of the surroundings. Yousra, for example, had quite a list of places she visited during those months, both during group activities and independently. "J'ai utilisé mon gps pour découvrir Bruxelles à pied. Grand Place, place de Broeckère, ..." (Yousra, personal communication, May 1, 2022). The Grote Markt [2] is located right in the centre of the Brussels Pentagon, the historical city centre of the capital. The touristic square offers architectural splendour and a great number of terraces. De Broeckèreplein [3] is, in turn, the starting point for excursions on the pedestrian and greenish Anspachlaan. Yousra enthusiastically explained the explorations she made in the surroundings of her temporary residence. Some of her other visits were located beyond the 15-Minute City of the arrival centre. For instance, she remembered walking through the Warandepark with the staff and a group of residents. On the top of the hill of the Warande, this rectangular park, which was the first public park of Brussels, is located next to the Royal Palace (Visit Brussels, 2018). The park offers 12 hectares of green space, trees and symmetrical lanes. A second activity organised by the staff led Yousra to the car exposition in Autoworld in the Jubelpark. This symmetrical park is located on the border of the City of Brussels and the municipality of Etterbeek, covering 34 hectares (Wikipedia, 2022). Initially erected to celebrate 50 years of Belgian independence, the three triumphal arches are a landmark on the Tervurenlaan (Visit Brussels, 2018). The fifth

interviewee is Darlita. Since she had already lived in Brussels for several years when she was younger, the surroundings of Klein Kasteeltje were not unfamiliar to her. Therefore, during her two-week stay in the arrival centre, she did not visit specific locations in Brussels but rather met up with friends and family at their homes or in bars.

After conversations with these four interviewees, it appears that residing in Klein Kasteeltje is a different experience for each newcomer. Some want to explore the city, while others wait for their name to appear on the “Transfer List” in the courtyard, or enjoy the shelter while recovering from an often rough journey.

### The network

The arrival centre cooperates with various partners to assist in operating the centre or in organising activities. They mainly work with their own volunteers, but also with some volunteer organisations. Furthermore, there are a lot of varying collaborations for activities. F. De Braekeleer, coordinator of the animation team Buro Bizzi who organises the leisure and communication in Klein Kasteeltje, provided a short list of some of the partners. It is presented here on the right. It is not an exhaustive list, but it gives an impression of the kind of partnerships.

AFS Vlaanderen

promotes internationalisation and intercultural learning through workshops. For AFS, language is key to connect with others. (AFS Vlaanderen, 2022).



Service Citoyen

relies on volunteers who are committed to societal projects (Service Citoyen, 2021).



Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk Brussel

recruits volunteers who want to engage in any kind of project (Kenniscentrum WWZ, 2019).



Serve the City Brussels

is a group of volunteers from all over the world who show kindness to people in need in a practical way (Serve the City, n.d.).



Les Amis d’Accompagner

consists of volunteers who receive, listen to, orientate and accompany people who are in a difficult situation (Les Amis d’Accompagner, n.d.).



Circus Zonder Handen

tries to make the circus programme accessible to everyone (Circus Zonder Handen, n.d.).



Royal Brussels Cricket Club

is the oldest cricket club in Belgium, located in Lasne (RBCC, 2021).



BX Brussels

is convinced that football is a strong motivator for positive change and development of the youth (BX, 2022).



Zwambad Molenbeek

is a municipal swimming pool.



Kraainem Football

has established the We Welcome Young Refugees project (Fedasil Oudergem, 2021). Every Tuesday they invite four young people to their football training



Muntpunt

is the largest Dutch-language library in Brussels (Muntpunt, 2022).



Article 27

aims to facilitate cultural participation for all those in a difficult situation (Article 27, n.d.).



Iedereen Verdient Vakantie

organises day trips for people with a limited budget, a disability or a special request (IDV, n.d.).

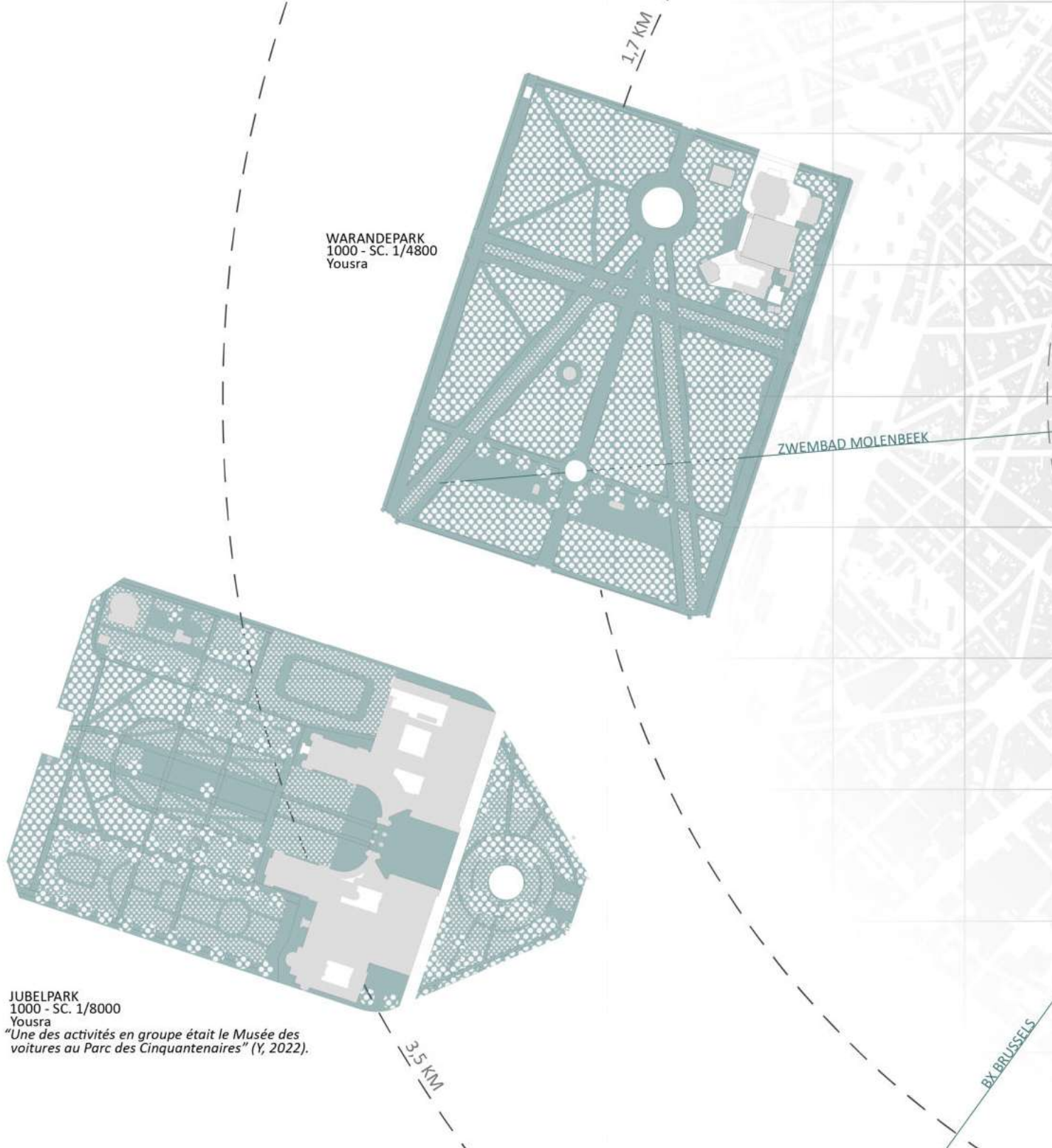


MMM Migratie Museum Migration

highlights the history of migration in Brussels (MMM, n.d.).



This map represents the “meso-places” that five asylum seekers explored during their stay in the arrival centre. The scale, the postal code of the municipality and the interviewees who mentioned the place are given for each plan. As Klein Kasteeltje is situated in the City of Brussels, there are many social infrastructures within its 15-Minute City. However, some of the residents prefer to stay inside the arrival centre during their first days in Belgium. Others enjoy exploring the surroundings or taking part in activities organised by the staff. Yousra, for instance, participated in activities and discovered two parks. The dotted lines on the left page indicate the distance in kilometres from Klein Kasteeltje to the “meso-place”. The corresponding macro number is also mentioned where relevant.



"Close to city is nice because I could go out, went to shopping streets. Nothing else because I didn't know the way." (Abel, 2022).

"Je ne suis pas sortie, pas dans mon état." (Denise, 2022).

3. DE BROUCKEREPLEIN [110]  
1000 - SC. 1/4000  
Yousra

AESVLAANDEREN

0,3KM

CIRCUS ZONDER HANDEN

KRAAINEM VOETBAL

ARRIVAL CENTRE  
1000 - SC. 1/4000

1. GASTON ICE CREAM  
1000 - SC. 1/600  
Haroun  
"I went out to get ice cream from 'Gasjton'.  
Is really good!" (H, 2022).

HET PUNT

1.

3.

SERVE THE CITY BRUSSELS  
SERVICE CITOYEN

15 MIN. WALK

MUNTPUNT

IEDEREEN VERDIENT VAKANTIE

ASBL ARTICK 27

2.

"Velen bevinden zich nog in een post-traumatische fase.  
Ze blijven liever op hun kamer." (M. Meirlaen, 2021).

2. GROTE MARKT [114]  
1000 - SC. 1/2400  
Yousra  
"J'ai utilisé mon gps pour découvrir Bruxelles à pied.  
Grand Place, place de Brouckère, ..." (Y, 2022).

BRCC

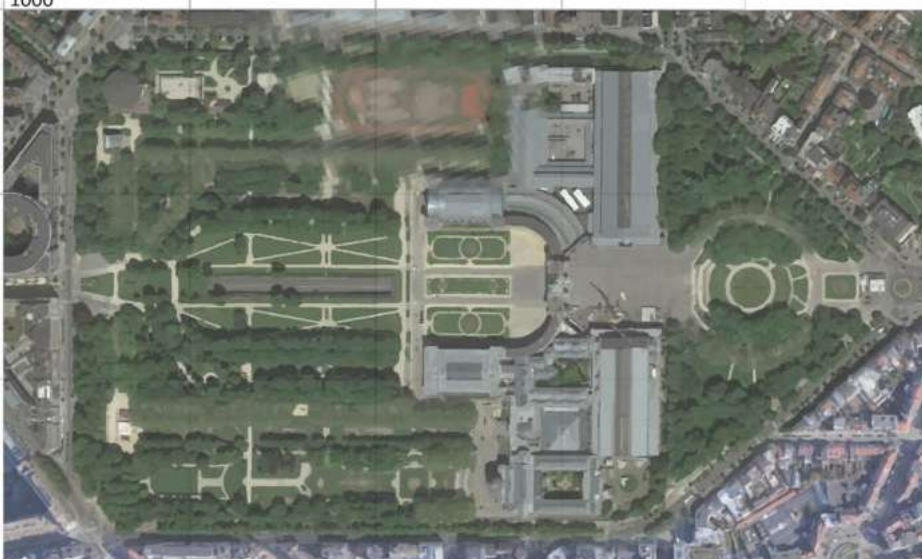
SC. 1/12000

The aerial photographs of the five meso sites give an idea of the character of these places. Two out of five sites are urban squares that attract all kinds of profiles. Another two are urban parks characterised by their symmetry. The fifth and final site is the ice-cream stand that Haroun often visited during his stay in Klein Kasteeltje.

WARANDEPARK  
1000



JUBELPARK  
1000



BRÜCKEREPLEIN  
1000



GROTE MARKT  
1000



GASTON ICE CREAM  
1000





### The history

In 2018, Klein Kasteeltje was converted into Belgium's only arrival centre. The building from 1853, located at the edge of the Brussels Pentagon, is a former military barracks. Designed by Mathieu Bernard, its robust appearance in authentic dark red bricks and main entrance marked with two small towers, catches the eye along the Brussels canal (Visit Brussels, n.d.). After World War II, the function of Klein Kasteeltje changed many times. Immediately after the war, the building served as a prison where collaborators were detained. Afterwards, miners from southern Europe were accommodated there while they waited for repatriation, and from 1951 the building housed the army recruitment and selection centre for the mandatory military service in Belgium (Wikipedia, 2021). Eventually, Fedasil transformed the building in 1986 into a reception centre (Visit Brussels, n.d.). As such, it is the oldest and largest reception centre in Belgium. Only in 2018, the reception centre was converted into the arrival centre that it is today (Fedasil, 2022). Since then, asylum seekers from all over the world queue in "the flow" to apply for international protection. The conversion of Klein Kasteeltje in 2018 involved a number of modifications to the building. Most of these were adjustments for organising the arrival trajectory along the gallery. Among other things, reception desks, waiting rooms and medical cabinets were installed in former bedrooms and storage rooms. To protect the route against views from the streets and the courtyard, numerous gates and fences were also erected. Because Fedasil's Dispatching department and the Immigration Office also moved here, numerous offices were also required. The rest of the construction works consisted mainly of separating walls and doors to modify the internal organisation of the building, sanitary works, glass works, HVAC and adjustments related to fire safety. Finally, an elevator was also installed for people with limited mobility (Regie der Gebouwen, 2018).

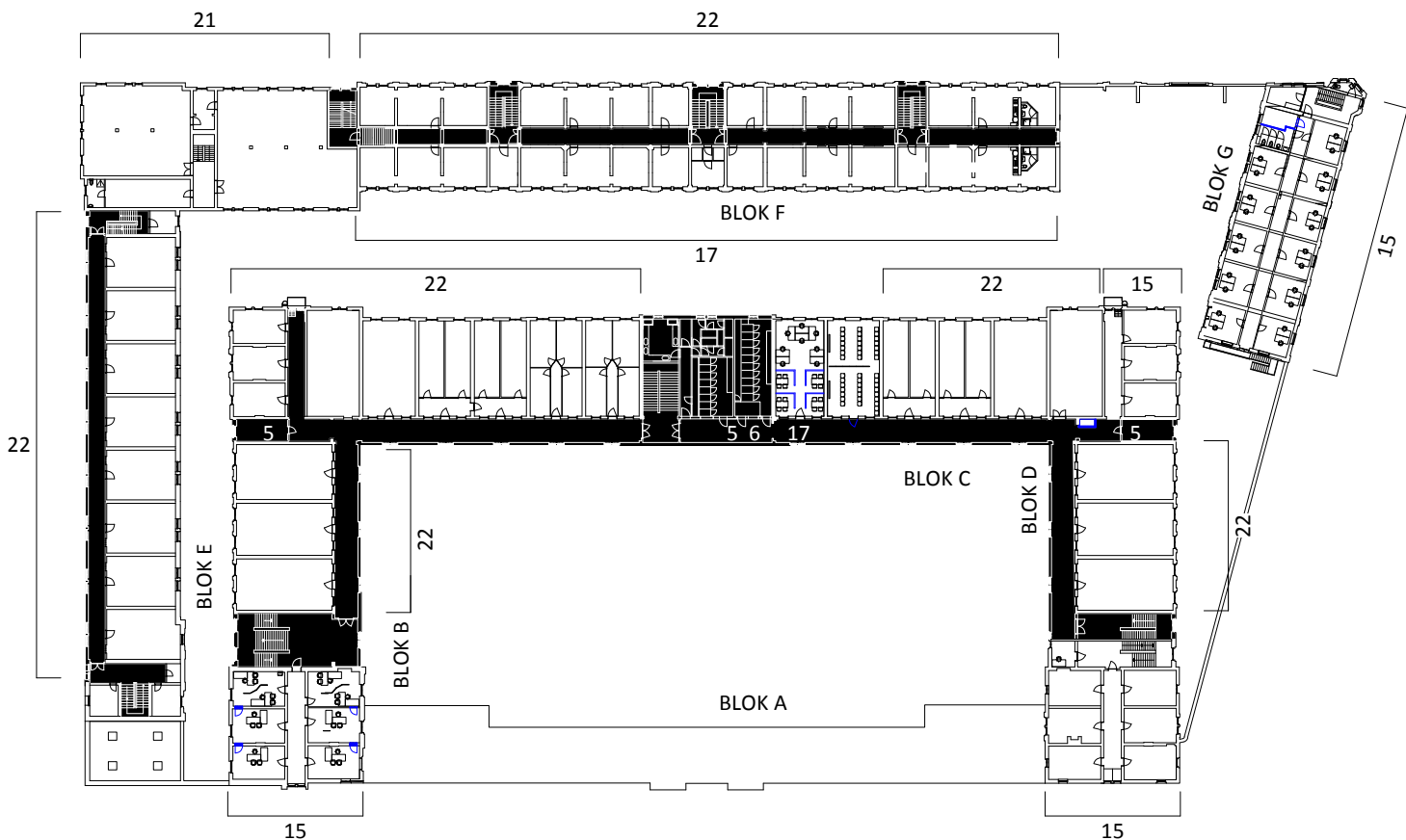
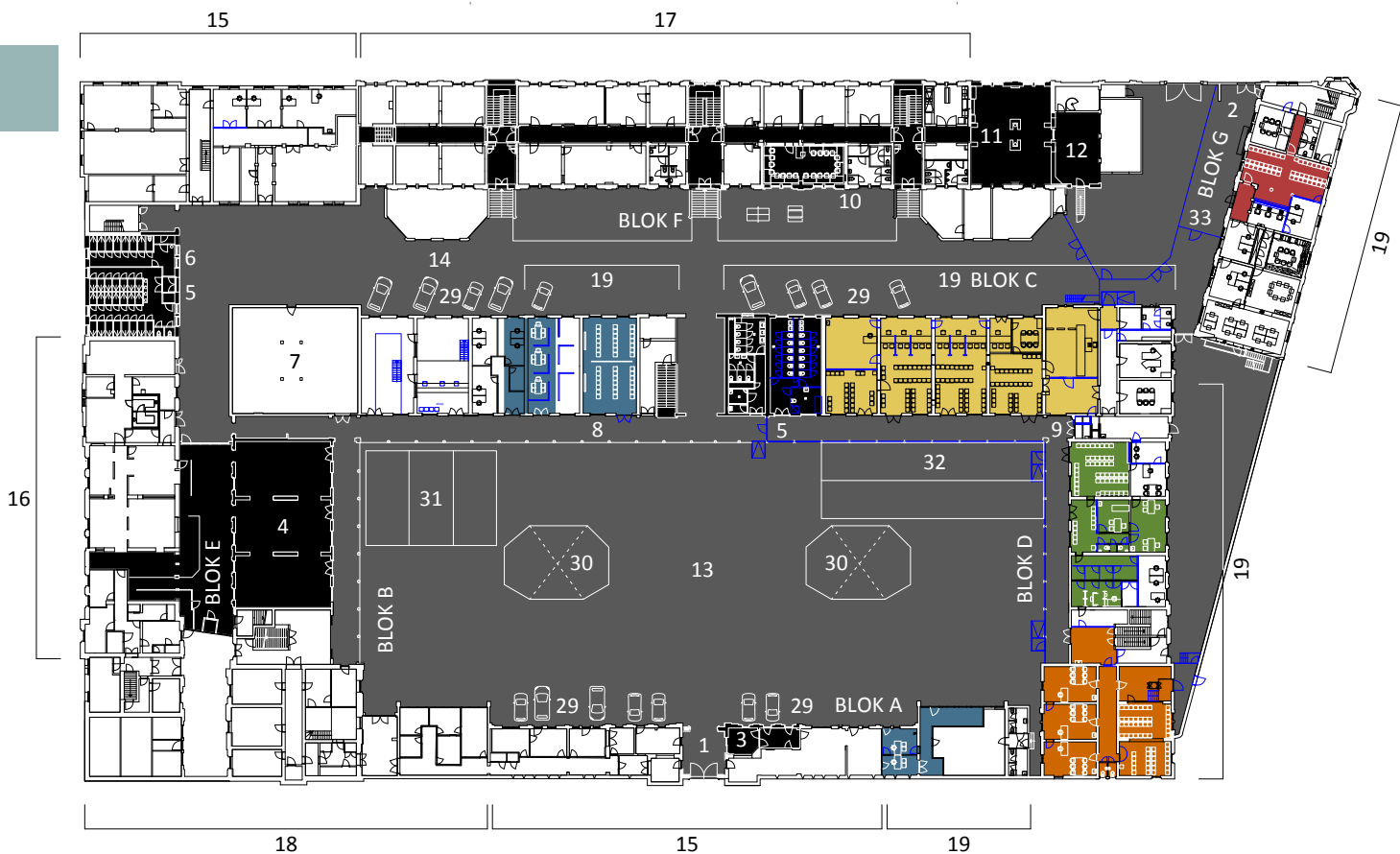
### The arrival centre

The floor plans of Klein Kasteeltje (pp. 74-75) were provided by B. Cleppe from Regie der Gebouwen. These plans from 2018 were drawn up for the purpose of converting the earlier building into the current arrival centre. The modifications are indicated in blue on the floor plans (pp. 74-75). The accompanying building specifications were also provided, as well as an overview of the most important functions within the building blocks. The tour of the buildings, including an explanation of how the arrival centre is organised, was given by M. Meirlaen, who holds office at Klein Kasteeltje. Because of privacy reasons and because of the critical situation at the time of the visit, the sleeping areas could not be shown.

The building has two official entrances. The first one is the main entrance on the Negende Linielaan, characterised by two towers, one on each side of the gate. This entrance is reserved for residents, staff members and visitors. The second entrance is located at the backside of the building, in the Passendalestraat. At this gate, the "flow" of people seeking international protection causes long queues every morning. Arrivals are divided into two rows: one row for families, women and unaccompanied minors; and another for single men. The latter persons are considered less vulnerable, so priority is given to the former queue. Consequently, single men do not always manage to get in on their arrival day, and have to wait for the next day. Meirlaen testified that on some days more than 400 people may be waiting at the gate: "We zitten in een crisis". However, no more than 150 people can be registered per day, otherwise they would still be processing at night (M. Meirlaen, personal communication, December 21, 2021). The people who do manage to enter, must follow the five stages of the arrival trajectory which is fenced off from the courtyard. These stages are colour-coded, both in reality and on the floor plans displayed in this study (pp. 74-75). The activities that take place here are explained in Chapter "(In)Hospitality in Brussels" (p. 29). If the applicant is admitted to stay in Klein Kasteeltje, he or she receives a tray with basic necessities, and is expected for a welcome speech in the "welcome room".

When passing through the gate of the main entrance on the Negende Linielaan, one needs to pass the reception desk with the help of an electronic badge. Subsequently, the first and largest courtyard opens up in front. Around the courtyard runs a gallery on three sides, while a car park for the staff takes up the fourth façade. Central to the courtyard, there are two octagonal islands with playgrounds. Furthermore, two tents were placed – at the time of visit - adjacent to the gallery. The first tent is an addendum to the refectory. The other one is part of the arrival trajectory and contains lockers for the temporary storage of the applicants' personal belongings. The main courtyard of the former military barracks is surrounded by building blocks A, B, C and D. The ground floor of blocks C en D accommodates the arrival trajectory and some sanitary facilities. The welcome room, part of the fifth stage of the trajectory, is one of the few gathering spaces in the centre. Moreover, it is the only room in the centre where WiFi is available. In blocks A and B, the reception desk, staff offices, technical rooms and the refectories are situated on the ground floor. On the upper floors of building blocks B, C and D, the single men are housed. They sleep in dormitories for 12 residents and share the sanitary facilities, located in block C, with all the people who live on the same floor.

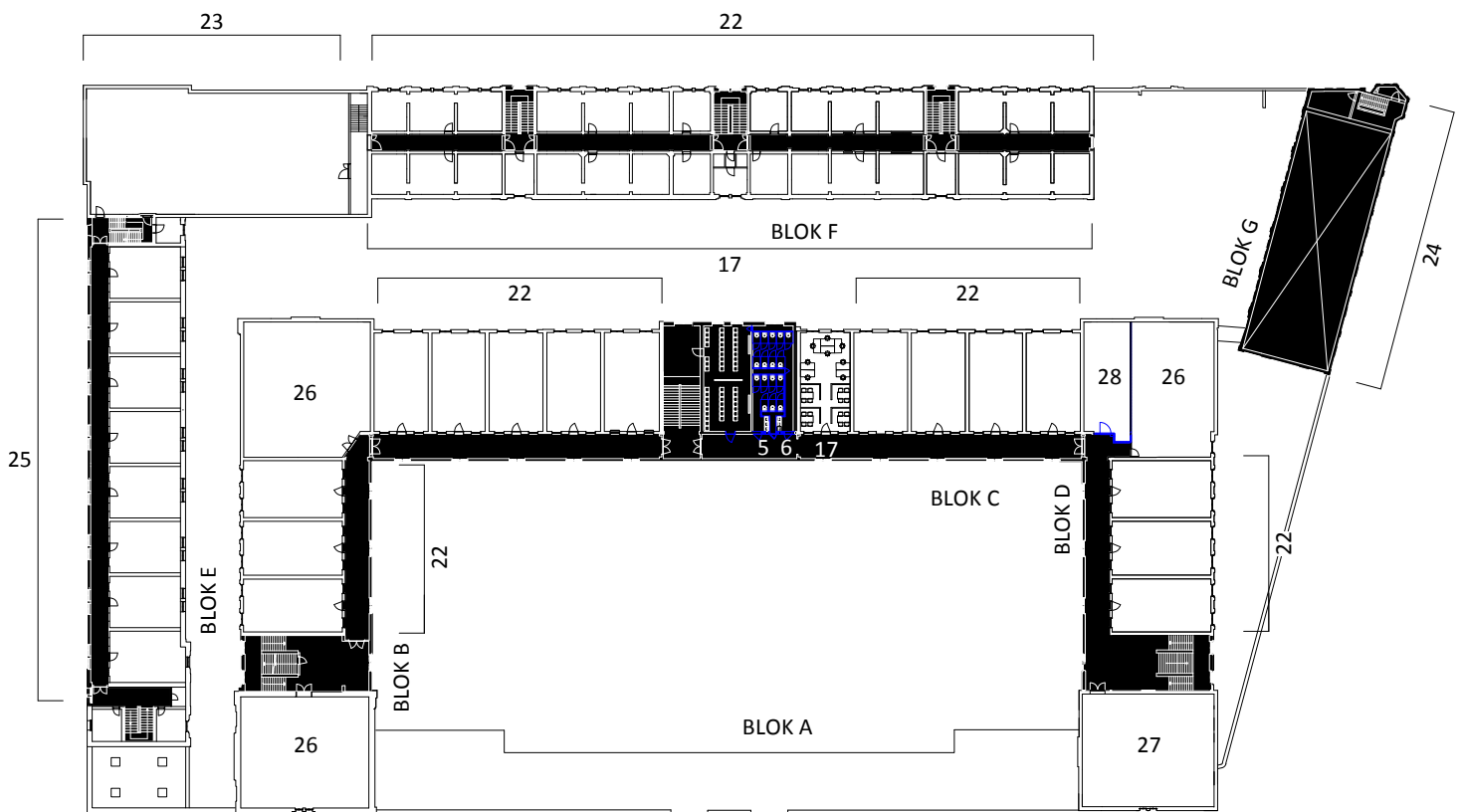
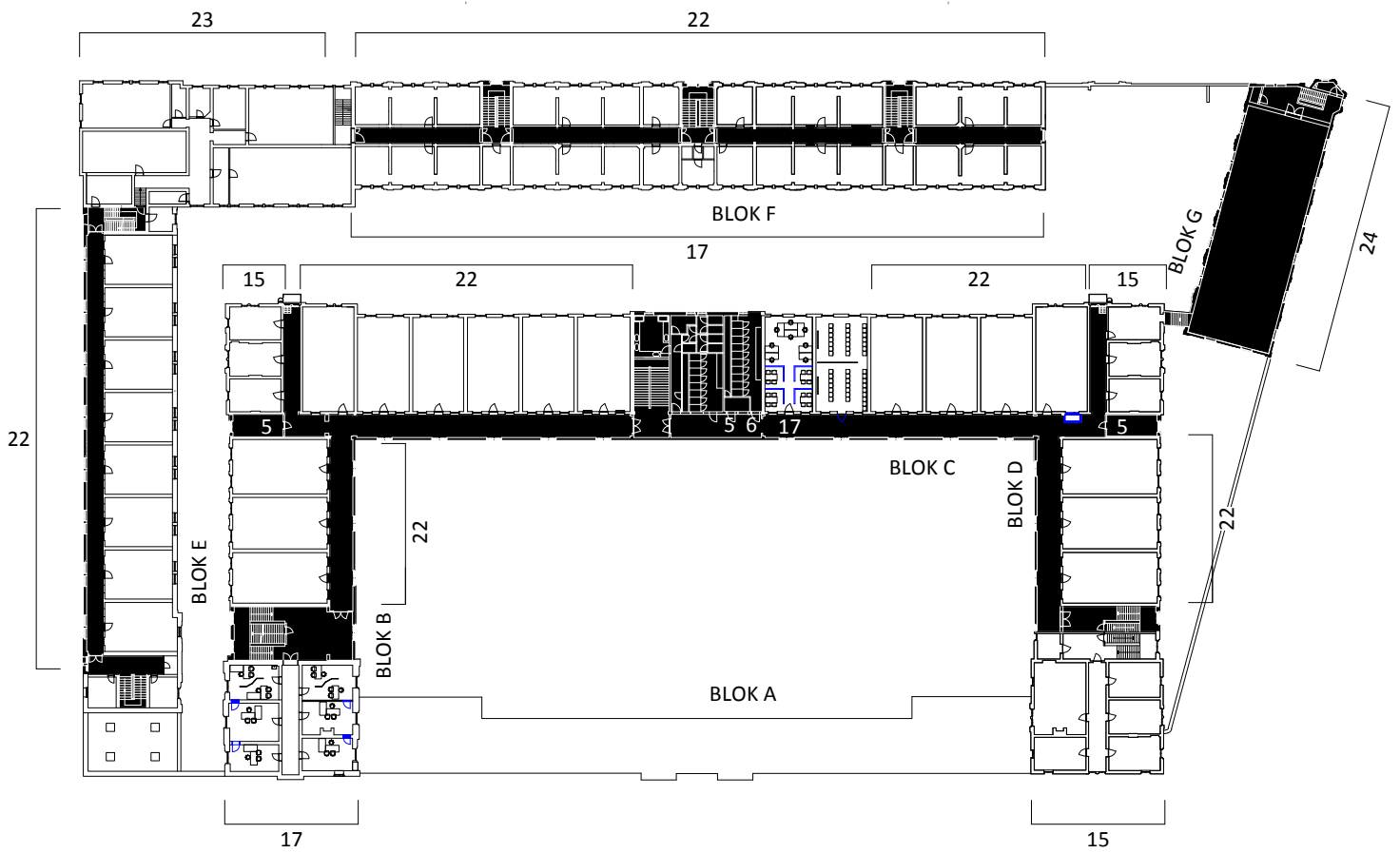
Blocks E, F, and G encircle the second courtyard. This narrow courtyard is dominated by parked cars and feels trapped between the high building blocks. However, it is furnished with a few benches, picnic tables and a tennis table. On the ground floor, block E contains the kitchen and block F contains staff offices and most of the centre's collective spaces. There is a cyber room with computers and tables, a children's play area which is used as a daycare during several hours a day, and an activity room. The latter is used for activities organised by the animation team Buro Buzzi, who organises the leisure and communication in Klein Kasteeltje. In addition to general activities, activities are organised specifically for women and/or children. For example "yoga for women" and "women activity" were organised during the week of the visit. The "kids activities" took place every week day. The upper levels in building blocks E and F accommodate families and single women. However, due to the shortage of places in the OOCs, some 70 unaccompanied minors are also housed in these wings. Finally, block G is located in the corner of the complex, next to the entrance for new arrivals. It houses the first stage of the arrival trajectory and is mainly occupied with staff offices and a sports hall.



- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Entrance residents, staff and visitors            | 13. Courtyard A  | 24. Sports hall                        |
| 2. Entrance application for international protection | 14. Courtyard B  | 25. Studio's                           |
| 3. Reception desk                                    | 15. Staff offices  | 26. Spare room                         |
| 4. Refectory   | 16. Kitchen / Stock                                      | 27. Meeting room                       |
| 5. Toilets   | 17. Social assistance                                    | 28. HVAC                               |
| 6. Showers   | 18. Medical assistance                                   | 29. Parking staff                      |
| 7. Heating   | 19. Arrival trajectory                                   | 30. Playground                         |
| 8. Welcome room                                      | 20. Administration                                       | 31. Tent 1: refection reception centre |
| 9. Gallery   | 21. Technical room                                       | 32. Tent 2: arrival trajectory         |
| 10. Cyberroom  | 22. Rooms  | 33. Tent 3: arrival trajectory         |
| 11. Activity room                                    | 23. Storage room / technical local / non-renovated rooms |  |
| 12. Daycare  |  |  |

SC. 1/1000 ●

- Collective space
- Outdoor space
- Adjustments in 2018



1. Entrance residents, staff and visitors
2. Entrance application for international protection
3. Reception desk
4. Refectory
5. Toilets
6. Showers
7. Heating
8. Welcome room
9. Gallery
10. Cyberroom
11. Activity room
12. Daycare

13. Courtyard A
14. Courtyard B
15. Staff offices
16. Kitchen / Stock
17. Social assistance
18. Medical assistance
19. Arrival trajectory
20. Administration reception centre
21. Technical room
22. Rooms
23. Storage room / technical local / non-renovated rooms

24. Sports hall
25. Studio's
26. Spare room
27. Meeting room
28. HVAC
29. Parking staff
30. Playground
31. Tent 1: refectory
32. Tent 2: arrival trajectory
33. Tent 3: arrival trajectory

SC. 1/1000 ●

■ Collective space  
 ■ Outdoor space

■ Adjustments in 2018



Fig. 5 Around 8 am the first asylum seekers are welcomed at the entrance in the Passendalestraat.



Fig. 6 The arrival trajectory along the Registration and Dispatching Departments runs along the gallery. This is separated from the courtyard with fences (Regie der Gebouwen, 2019).



Fig. 7 Information board in the large courtyard.



Fig. 8 Cyberroom in block F.

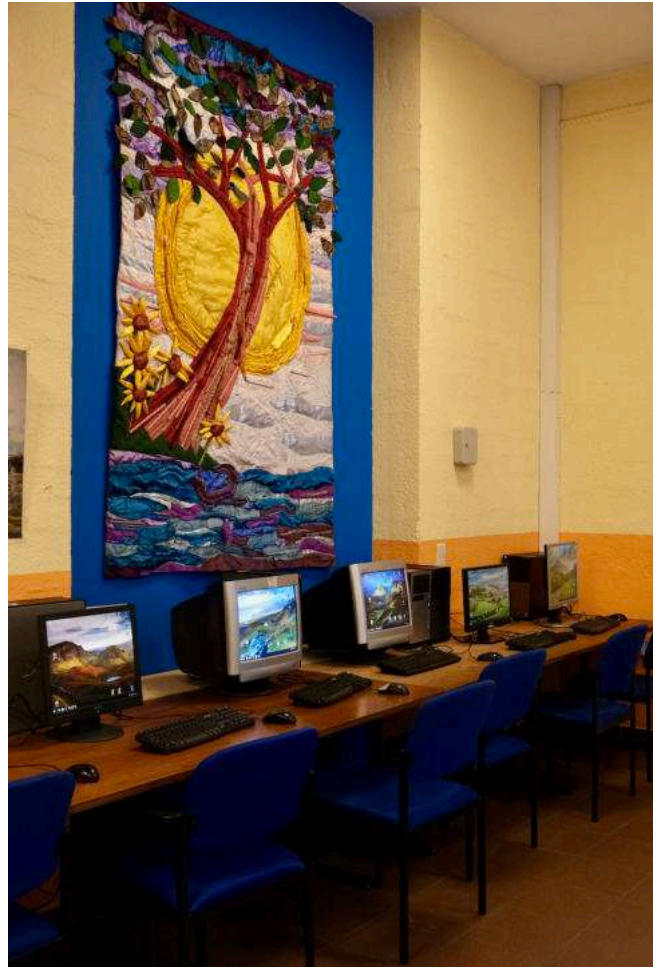


Fig. 9 Cyberroom in block F.



Fig. 10 Children's play area in block F.



Fig. 11 The second, narrow courtyard is dominated by parked cars.



### The rooms

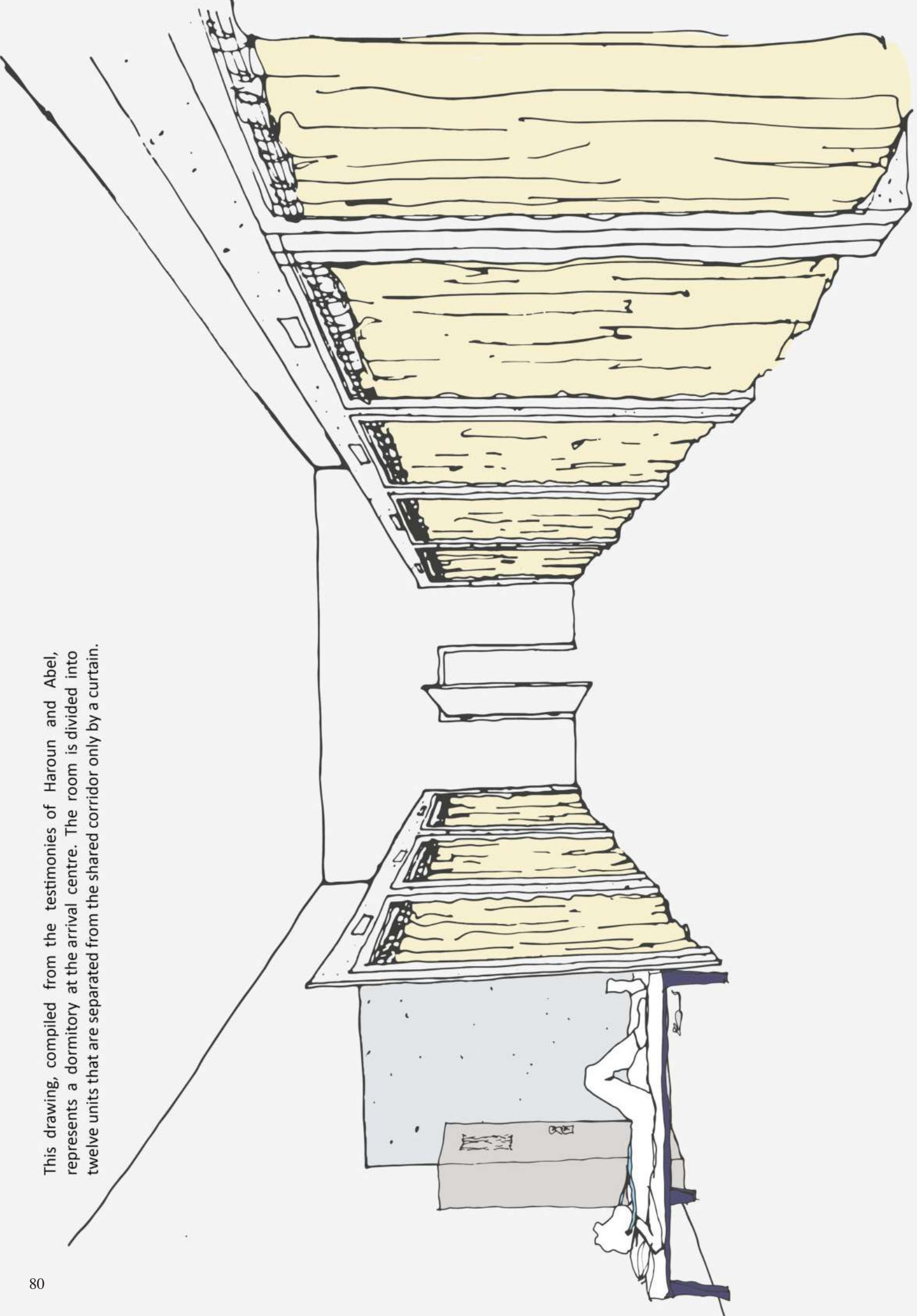
As Klein Kasteeltje houses different target groups, there are different types of bedrooms for each building block. As mentioned above, the sleeping areas of Klein Kasteeltje could not be shown due to privacy reasons and because of the critical situation at the time of the visit. M. Meirlaen testified that the condition of the bedrooms is very poor. Especially hygiene is a big issue in Klein Kasteeltje. She explained that some inhabitants stand on the toilet seat or use the toilet as a trash bin and throw objects in it. She also preferred not to share a photograph. Therefore, the drawings of the rooms (pp. 80-83) are based on the testimonies of the five interviewees that were introduced in the meso analysis of Klein Kasteeltje.

Single men reside in blocks B, C and D, from the first to the third floor level. These floors are divided into dormitories of 12m by 6m, in which twelve smaller individual sleeping units are created with thin gyproc walls that do not reach up to the ceiling. Every dormitory can be reached through a single door only, which is always open to the main corridor of the building block. From there, a small and empty corridor within each dormitory leads to the individual units. The 'entrance' of each unit consist of a curtain. Two interviewees, who are currently living in the Zaventem reception centre, stayed in one of these dormitories at the start of their asylum procedure. Both men had experienced their stay as difficult. When Haroun arrived at Klein Kasteeltje, he was "shocked, more than thousand people!" (Haroun, personal communication, February 25, 2022). He stayed for four days in a unit of 4m<sup>2</sup> in a dormitory. The unit was furnished with a locker and a bed. This visual barriers between the different units was appreciated, but it does not much reduce the noise from roommates. "The walls looked like magnetic boards. They didn't reach the ceiling, so we could hear everything" (Haroun, personal communication, February 25, 2022). Abel, the second interviewee from Zaventem, had lived in Klein Kasteeltje for about two weeks. He also pointed out noise as the biggest problem of the bedrooms. At night, he put on his headphones to be shielded from his roommates' snoring. Besides the noise, Abel raised the issue of hygiene: "Not clean, I saw mice under my bed" (Abel, personal communication, February 25, 2022). To complete this brief description of the physical layout, most of the dormitories have four large windows; two on the exterior façade, and two windows in the internal wall between the dormitory and the main corridor. This leaves four of the units within each dormitory with daylight, and eight without. Haroun complained that he did not have a window in his compartment.

Two of the persons interviewed later on at the Jette reception centre had resided in Block F of Klein Kasteeltje upon arrival in Belgium. This block is reserved for single women. In this building, the rooms are slightly different from the dormitories for single men described above, i.e. from those around the central courtyard. In Block F, the rooms are divided in individual units, but this time for 8 women. Apart from the sleeping units, the room provides the women with a common living space. "Une salle commune avec la TV, une table et une cuisine. Mais il n'y avait pas le gaz" (Yousra, personal communication, May 1, 2022). Yousra resided in Klein Kasteeltje for two months, while Denise only stayed there for one week. In block E, adjacent to block F, the family studios are located. They are furnished like a small apartment. In 2021, Darlita, with her husband and baby daughter, resided in such a room. "We hadden een aparte gezinskamer. Petit Château was goed voor mij" (Darlita, personal communication, February 25, 2022). Due to a lack of information about these rooms from the interviews, the drawing of the family room included in this thesis was also based on the pictures in the book "Transit 51" (Van Damme, 2015).



This drawing, compiled from the testimonies of Haroun and Abel, represents a dormitory at the arrival centre. The room is divided into twelve units that are separated from the shared corridor only by a curtain.



"Big room, but divided in twelf little units" (Haroun, 2022).

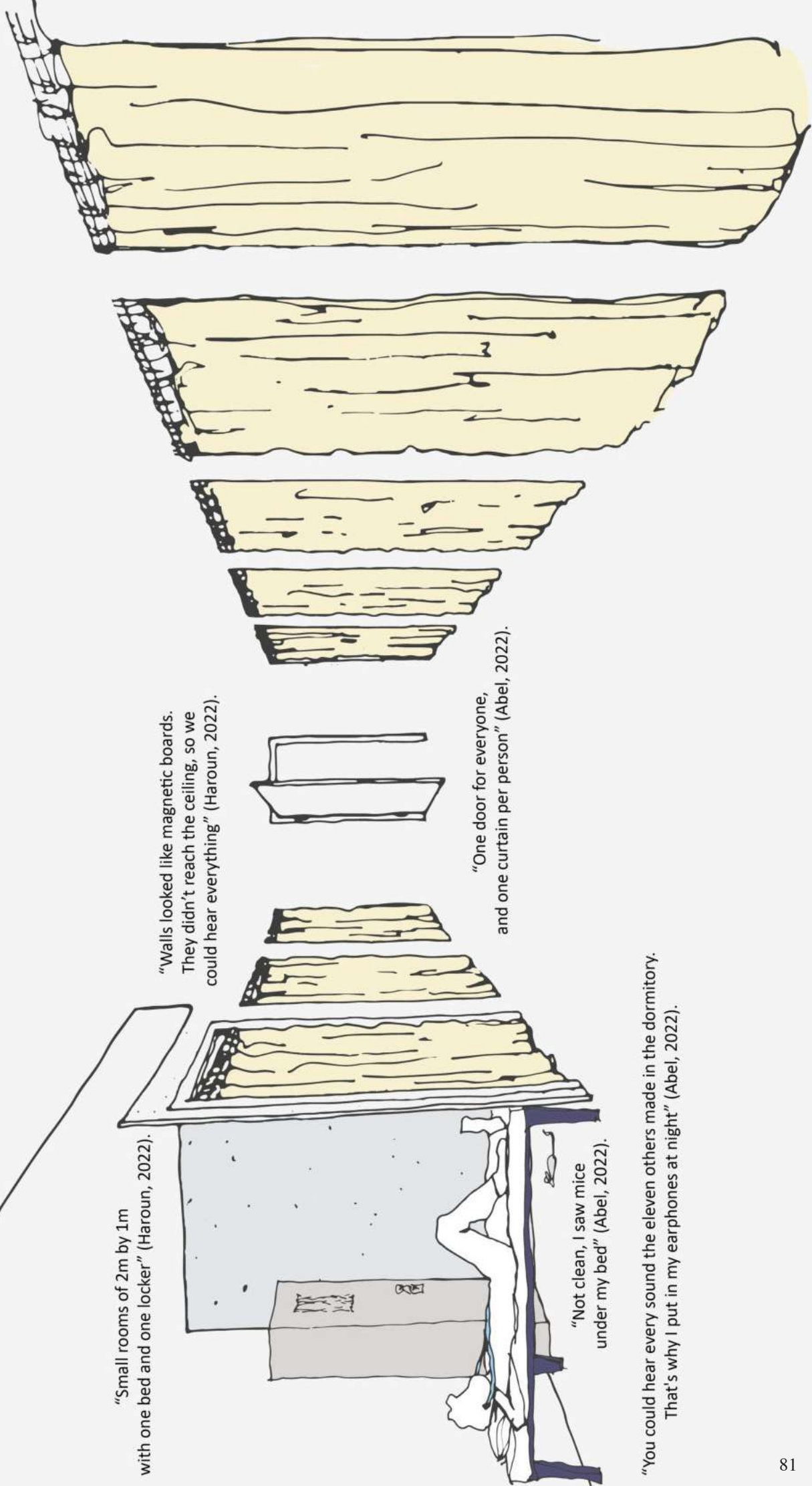
"Small rooms of 2m by 1m with one bed and one locker" (Haroun, 2022).

"Walls looked like magnetic boards. They didn't reach the ceiling, so we could hear everything" (Haroun, 2022).

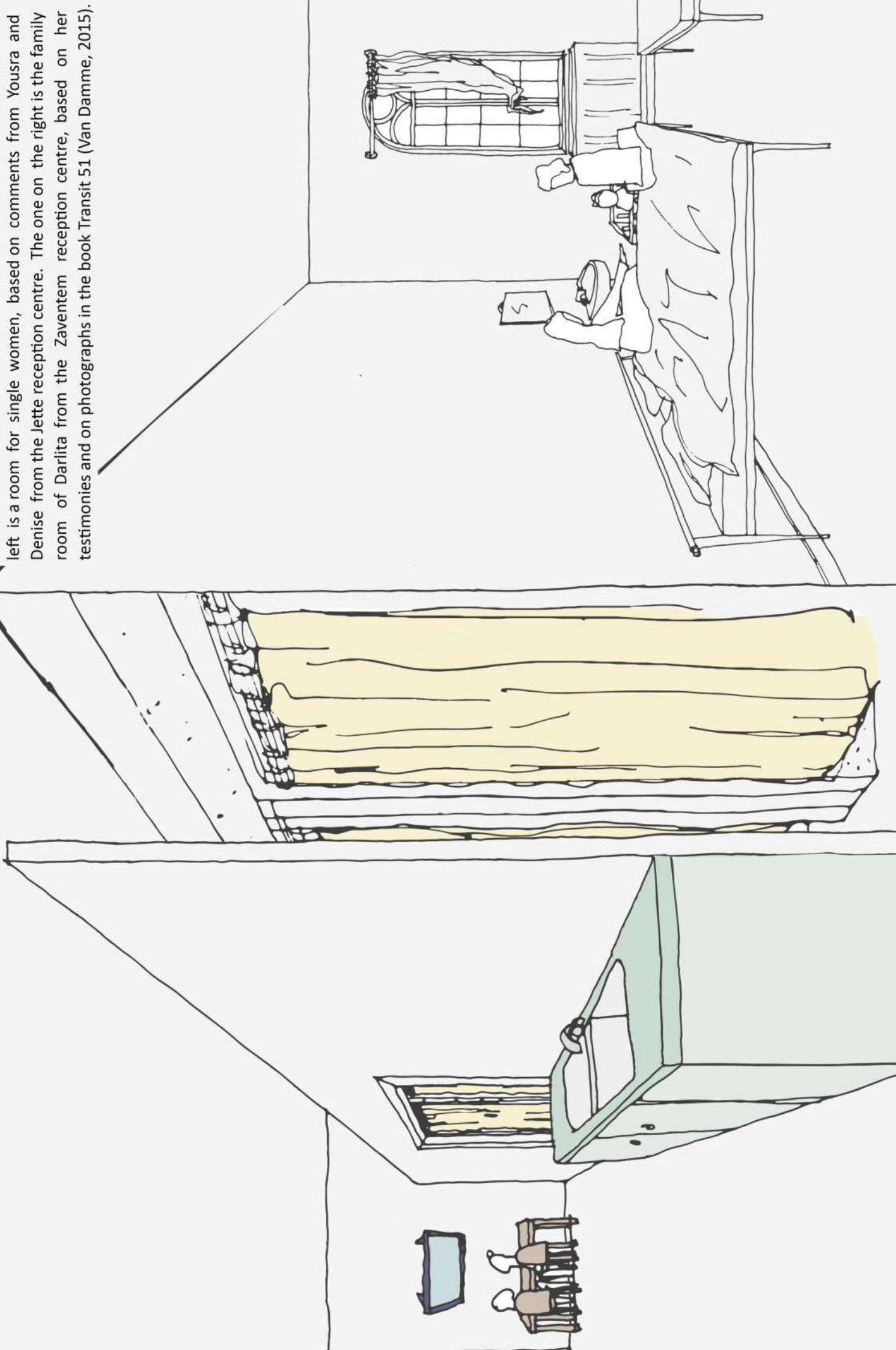
"One door for everyone, and one curtain per person" (Abel, 2022).

"Not clean, I saw mice under my bed" (Abel, 2022).

"You could hear every sound the eleven others made in the dormitory. That's why I put in my earphones at night" (Abel, 2022).



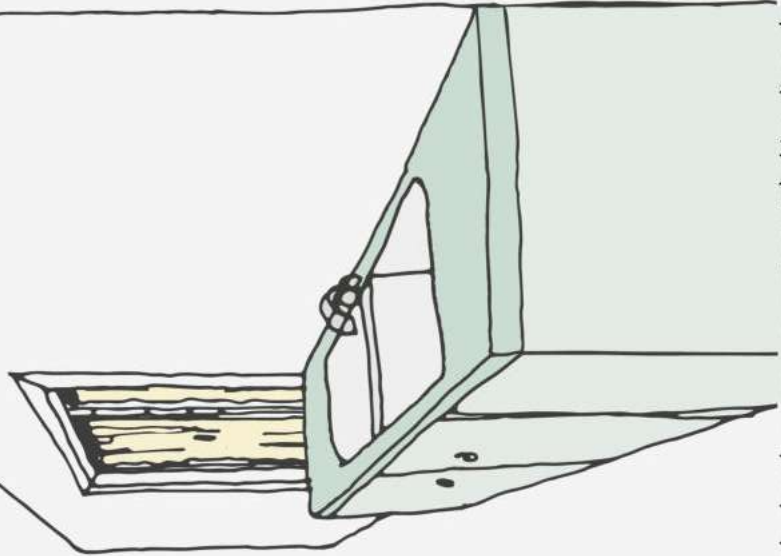
This image represents two other types of rooms in Klein Kasteeltje. On the left is a room for single women, based on comments from Yousra and Denise from the Jette reception centre. The one on the right is the family room of Darlita from the Zaventem reception centre, based on her testimonies and on photographs in the book Transit 51 (Van Damme, 2015).



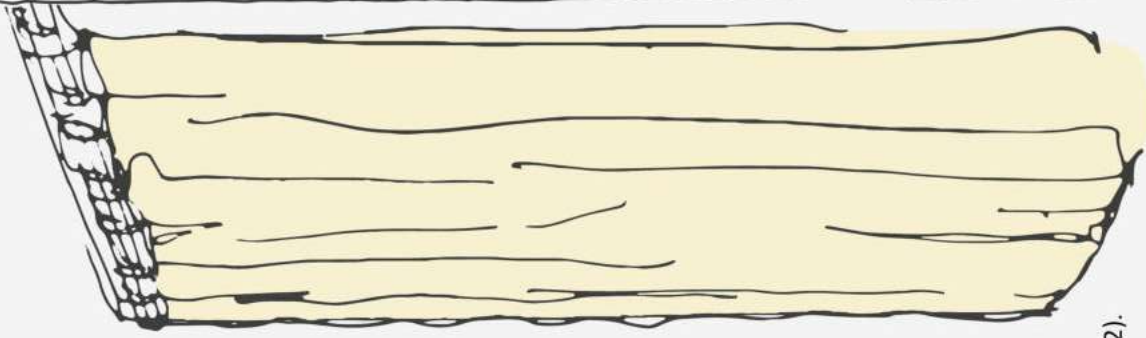
"Grote kamer, hoog plafond, comfortabel" (Darlita, 2022).

"Douze personnes mais des rideaux donc un peu d'espace privé. Personne qui te voit" (Yousra, 2022).

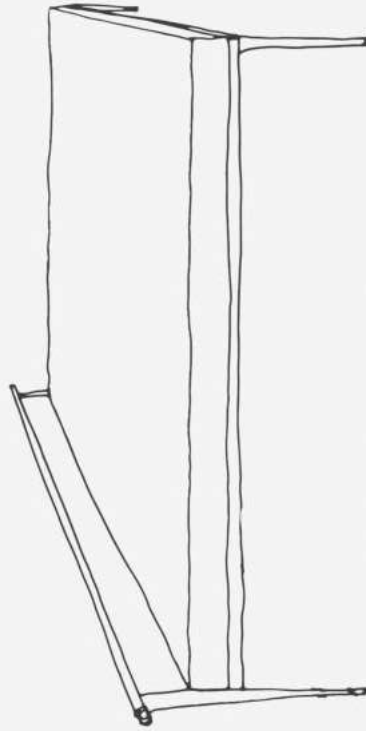
"Une salle commune avec la TV, une table et une cuisine. Mais il n'y avait pas le gaz" (Yousra, 2022).



"Très grande chambre, pas propre et pas très bien disposée. J'ai vu plein de souris. La chambre n'était juste pas très commode" (Denise, 2022).



"Hadden zelfs vier bedden, twee te veel, en een babybedje" (Darlita, 2022).



"We hadden een aparte gezinskamer. Petit Château was goed voor mij" (Darlita, 2022).

## Endnote Klein Kasteeltje

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## Figures

Fig. 1.: Fedasil. (2013, July 8). Courtyard of Klein Kasteeltje [Photograph]. Fedasil. <https://www.fedasil.be/nl/nieuws/vreemdelingenbureau-klein-kasteeltje-positief-beoordeeld>

Fig. 2.: Canal Brussels. (n.d.). "Macro" image: Klein Kasteeltje is located along the Brussels canal [Photograph]. <https://canal.brussels/nl/kanaalplan>

Fig. 3.: "Meso" image: the Grote Markt is just outside the 15-Minute City of Klein Kasteeltje. (2021, October 20). In Wikipedia [Photograph]. [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grote\\_Markt\\_\(Brussel\)](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grote_Markt_(Brussel))

Fig. 4.: Own picture. (2021, December 21). "Micro" image: around 8 am the first asylum seekers are welcomed here [Photograph].

Fig. 5.: Own picture. (2021, December 21). Around 8 am the first asylum seekers are welcomed at the entrance in the Passendalestraat [Photograph].

Fig. 6.: Regie der Gebouwen. (2019, March 4). The arrival trajectory along the Registration and Dispatching Departments runs along the gallery. This is separated from the courtyard with fences [Photograph]. <https://www.regiedergebouwen.be/nl/projects/opvangcentrum-klein-kasteeltje>

Fig. 7.: Own picture. (2021, December 21). Information board in the large courtyard [Photograph].

Fig. 8.: Own picture. (2021, December 21). Cyberroom in block F [Photograph].

Fig. 9.: Own picture. (2021, December 21). Cyberroom in block F [Photograph].

Fig. 10.: Own picture. (2021, December 21). Children's play area in block F [Photograph].

Fig. 11.: Own picture. (2021, December 21). The second, narrow courtyard is dominated by parked cars [Photograph].



**CASE 2: OUDERGEM**

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OOC

One of Fedasil's more recent centres is the observation and orientation centre for unaccompanied minor boys in Oudergem, which was opened on 4 October 2021 due to a lack of reception places. It offers reception during their first weeks in Belgium, after registering in the Klein Kasteeltje. In addition to the daily basic needs, social, legal, medical and psychological assistance is provided. Once the psycho-medical profile is determined, the minor is transferred to phase 2.



**Type:** OOC unaccompanied boys

**Foundation:** 2021

**Architect:** unknown

**Owner:** private

**Scale:** 430m<sup>2</sup> x 4 floors

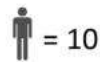
**Surroundings:** residential zone

**Previous function:** nursing home

**Staff:**



**Volunteers:**



**Inhabitants:**



Fig. 1 The OOC in Oudergem.





Fig. 2 "Macro" image: the Zoniënwood covers half of the macro map of Oudergem (PhotoNews, 2018).



Fig. 3 "Meso" image: the park Rood Klooster is used for group activities (Google Maps, n.d.).



Fig. 4 "Micro" image: refectory in the OOC.

## MACRO

The macro map of Oudergem (p. 90) features around 80 social infrastructures, which is about four times less than in the macro map of Klein Kasteeltje. However, this is logical given the location in the outskirts of Brussels and the fact that half of the study area is already occupied by the Zoniënwoud [32]. Of the various (sub)categories, museums [4] in particular seem to be scarcely present. However, the other subcategories of public institutions are well represented. Schools [5-19] are particularly abundant. However, as with Klein Kasteeltje, the unaccompanied minors staying in an observation and orientation centre do not yet attend school. They do have access to other social infrastructures, such as the parks and forests [26-32]. The Zoniënwoud [32], the largest beech forest in the country, covers half of the macro map of Oudergem. The staff is convinced of the positive effect that greenspace can have on the minors in the OOC, which is why it is often used for activities (G. Terras, personal communication, November 19, 2021). Adjacent to the Zoniënwoud one can find the park Rood Klooster [29] and various sports facilities. As the minors do not yet attend school, their days are often spent doing various activities organised by the centre and their partners. Sport is an important part of this.

The observation and orientation centre is located in a primarily residential area. Most commercial infrastructures can be found to the north of the route E411, which is somewhat of a barrier for people traveling on foot to the north. In particular, the large supermarkets and restaurant chains such as Burger King [45] can be found here. However, the number of restaurants accessible is limited by the weekly pocket money given to the minors (€6,1). The route E411 is itself an important road for public transport. Several bus lines make use of it, and the metro network also runs parallel to this road. The Herrmann-Debroux metro stop [82] is just within the 15-minute city limits of the OOC, which is very practical for the minors. Perpendicular to the E411 runs the Vorstlaan along which the tram passes. The means of transport that is not present in the research area is the train. As a result, the journeys of the inhabitants of the OOC are mainly limited to Brussels.



Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe

Jukkel - Eisene - Etterbeek  
Anderlecht

Hamme-Mille - Terhulpen - Waver - Mellezen - Perwijs

15 MIN. WALK

90  
SC. 1/12000  
74.

## PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

### Libraries

- 1. Openbare Bibliotheek Oudergem
- 2. Bibliothèque du Centre
- 3. De Bib

### Museums

- 4. Jardin botanique et expérimental Jean Massart

### Schools

- 5. GO! Basissch. De Stadsmus
- 6. Lutgardiscollege
- 7. Savd
- 8. School Pré Des Agneaux
- 9. Establishment Sainte-Bernadette
- 10. Vormingscentrum Blankedelle
- 11. Collège Saint-Hubert
- 12. Schallerschool
- 13. College Saint-Hubert ASBL
- 14. Le Karrenberg
- 15. GO! Basissch. De Bloeiende Kerselaar
- 16. Institut de l'Assomption Ste Thérèse
- 17. Centre Scolaire Du Souverain
- 18. De l'Autre Côté de l'Ecole
- 19. Koninklijk Atheneum van Oudergem

### Squares

- 20. Place Communale d'Auderghem
- 21. Square du Souverain
- 22. Edouard Pinoyplein
- 23. Square Roger Hainautlaan
- 24. Andrée Payfa-Fosseprezplein
- 25. Square Sint-Annakerk

### Parks and forests

- 26. Senypark
- 27. Het Tenreukenpark
- 28. Bergojepark
- 29. Rood Klooster
- 30. Tuin Jean Massart
- 31. Leybeekpark
- 32. Zoniënwoud

## COMMERCE

### Food shops

- 33. Foodshop épicerie
- 34. Louis Delhaize Oudergem (Texaco)
- 35. Delhaize Debroux
- 36. Hypermarkt Carrefour
- 37. ALDI Auderghem
- 38. Louis Delhaize Oudergem (Texaco)
- 39. Proxy Delhaize Vogelzang
- 40. Proxy Delhaize Bosvoorde
- 41. Day Shop
- 42. Shilla Supermarket
- 43. Carrefour Express Bosvoorde

- 44. Carrefour Express Souverain

### Restaurants [< € 6,1]

- 45. Burger King Oudergem
- 46. Le Relais du Triporteur
- 47. Lunch Garden Auderghem
- 48. Tram de Boitsfort
- 49. Friture Mamy
- 50. Snack Deniz Auderghem
- 51. Le TRAC
- 52. Le Bar du Patron

### Hair salons and barbers

- 53. Hair Passion
- 54. Georgie & Greg
- 55. Coiffure Borra-Borra
- 56. Chappel SK
- 57. Stylé de Bruxelles à Palermo
- 58. Jo's Team
- 59. Laurent Vallery
- 60. Colette Coiffure
- 61. Alexandre Duchenne
- 62. Verbaanderd/Rudi
- 63. Clô Coiffure
- 64. Chiara Camille

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Sports facilities

- 65. Sportcomplex van het Zoniënwoud
- 66. Tennis Club des Trois Fontaines
- 67. Parc Auderghem Hockey Club
- 68. Football Club Irlande ASBL
- 69. Logis Auderghem
- 70. Royal BC Oudergem

### Cinema and theatre

- 71. Théâtre de la parole
- 72. Kabbale
- 73. Cultureel Centrum van Oudergem

## RELIGION

- 74. Orthodoxe Kerk
- 75. Kerk Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Blankedelle
- 76. Vineyard Church
- 77. Sint Vincentiusvereniging
- 78. Sint-Annakerk
- 79. New Abbaye

## TRANSIT

### A. Bus direction

- 80. Bus stop Transvaal

### B. Tram direction

- 81. Tram stop Tenreuken

### C. Metro direction

- 82. Metro station Hermann-Debroux

### The interviewees

The interviews in the Observation and Orientation Centre (henceforth OOC) in Oudergem took place on the 22nd of February, just after supper time. The week before the interviews, the staff inquired those minors who speak a certain level of English, French or Dutch whether they were interested to participate in a discussion for this research. Four boys were willing to share their experiences, and a list with their names and preferred language was sent before the visit. The interviews took place in a room on the ground floor, set up as a quarantine room for the COVID-19 pandemic. The first interviewee is called Joseph, a 17-year-old boy who originates from Congo and had been staying in the OOC since January 2022. He was followed by a resident called Karim. Karim, who is sixteen years old, is an Afghan boy who also had been living in the OOC for approximately one month. The third interviewee is the enthusiastic Ajob, whose journey was presented in the Chapter “Phase 0: The Road to Brussels”. Ajob is an Iranian of 20 years old. Finally, a conversation was also held with 16-year-old Emir, who arrived one month and two weeks before the interview, all the way from Afghanistan. All four conversations gave insights into life at the centre. This information was complemented by the explanations by director G. Terras and assistant director F. Leysen.

Joseph reached Brussels via several flights and a boat transfer. However, the duration of his journey was about one year due to the long stays in Turkey and Greece, where he stayed in a camp. In turn, Karim “never stopped, always travelled, no sleep” (Karim, personal communication, February 22, 2022). He walked most of the journey from Afghanistan to Romania, and subsequently travelled by car in between to reach Poland. From there he took some trains through Germany to reach the Belgian capital. Ajob’s five-month journey started in Iran together with a group of men, he crossed Turkey where he attempted to pass its border with Greece, but without success. Eventually, he managed to get access to a boat that brought him to Italy after which he was transported to Belgium in a van. The journey by interviewee Emir was primarily made on foot, alternated with car rides. During the journey, Emir was hosted in camps in Bulgaria, Serbia and Austria. From Austria, he took several trains through Switzerland and France to reach Belgium.

### The map

Because of the function of the OOC, residents only stay for a limited period of time before being transferred to a Phase 2 reception centre. During these weeks of observation, their psycho-medical profiles are drawn up in order to find a suitable reception centre for them. In practice, however, they are simply sent wherever

a free place is available (G. Terras, personal communication, November 19, 2021). When asked about the places that the minors frequented most, the first place that director Terras mentioned is the local grocery shop [1] further down the street. Another popular shop among the boys is the hypermarket Carrefour [2] across the Herrmann-Debrouxlaan to the north. Since the minors do not attend school during these weeks, activities in the surroundings of the OOC and visits to the City of Brussels are organised regularly by the staff. Thanks to the presence of green area in the Transvaal district, most activities near the OOC take place in the parks. Park Rood Klooster [4] is one of these locations. This 18-hectare park holds great heritage value due to the centuries-long presence of the Augustinian monks (Garden Brussels, n.d.). Today, as one of the gateways to the Zoniënwood, it offers promenades along the large ponds, a children’s farm, multiple playgrounds on the upper hills, as well as an arts centre and a botanical garden. The park merges into the Zoniënwood [5], also called the “green lungs of Brussels” (Visit Brussels, n.d.). This nature reserve that reaches into Wallonia has a surface area of more than 5,000 hectares and offers 170 km of walking trails (Zonienwoud, n.d.). Especially in the weekends, the staff organises promenades in this forest, an activity much appreciated by the minors. “I like to go to the woods to walk, because my mind is free. But always with assistant.” (Joseph, personal communication, February 22, 2022). However, Ajob seems more attracted to the bustling city centre: “I recognize the forest, but many dogs. I don’t like them.” (Ajob, personal communication, February 22, 2022). Another park, also situated on the edge of the 15-Minute City of the OOC is the Bergoje park [3]. Due to its limited size and its linearity, the park was not initially used for activities during the first months after the opening of the OOC. But in the meantime, one of the group activities, organised by partner Den Dam, took place here.

Some of the activities take place in the neighbouring municipalities. Ter Kameren Bos, for example, is used for sports activities. Furthermore, every week four minors can attend a training at the Kraainem football club which is one of the OOC’s partners. Ajob was very excited about this arrangement as he loves playing football. For group activities or individual trips to the City of Brussels, the minors often use the metro Herrmann-Debroux. The majority of the interviewees preferred to be accompanied when leaving the OOC. “I never go alone, always assistant” (Joseph, personal communication, February 22, 2022). Karim and Emir, too, preferred to be assisted by one of the staff members when discovering new places. Ajob, however, is very keen to spend his spare time discovering the city by himself: “I take metro, bus, tram and train. Atomium

with the metro! No England, I want to stay, I like Brussels.” (Ajub, personal communication, February 22, 2022).

### The network

Despite their recent foundation in October 2021, the OOC in Oudergem has already built up many partnerships. In addition to educational support, the focus is on collaborations for recreational activities.

#### Itinéraires asbl

welcomes and accompanies young people in difficulty. The service helps them to participate in social life and to become responsible and autonomous adults (Itinéraires, n.d.).



#### Asbl SolidarCité

has as its main objective the social and educational support of young people (Solidarcité, n.d.). They organise activities in the centre.



#### Les Gazelles de Bruxelles asbl

tries to reach people who have no or difficult access to sports. They organise running sessions to create encounters and exchange (Les Gazelles de Bruxelles, n.d.).



#### Asbl Jagora

tries to bring young people together, regardless of their background and origin (Jagora, 2021). Among other things, they organise artistic workshops.



#### Gemeenschapscentrum Den Dam

organise workshops, activities for children, concerts and much more. Creativity and ‘being together’ are the basis (Den Dam, 2022).



#### Service de Prévention

works on prevention and increasing safety (Sociale Kaart, n.d.). They give a course on citizenship and traffic safety, followed by a walk through the streets of Oudergem.



#### Cempa

is the educational cell of the prevention house and organise various workshops allowing exchanges between newcomers and the local residents (Oudergem, n.d.).



#### Asbl Maison des Jeunes

makes its infrastructure available to Fedasil when it is not in use (F. Leysen, personal communication, 28 February, 2022). The centre’s residents are also welcome there for activities.



#### Kraainem Football

has established the We Welcome Young Refugees project (Fedasil Oudergem, 2021). Every Tuesday they invite four young people to their football training.



#### Royal BC Oudergem

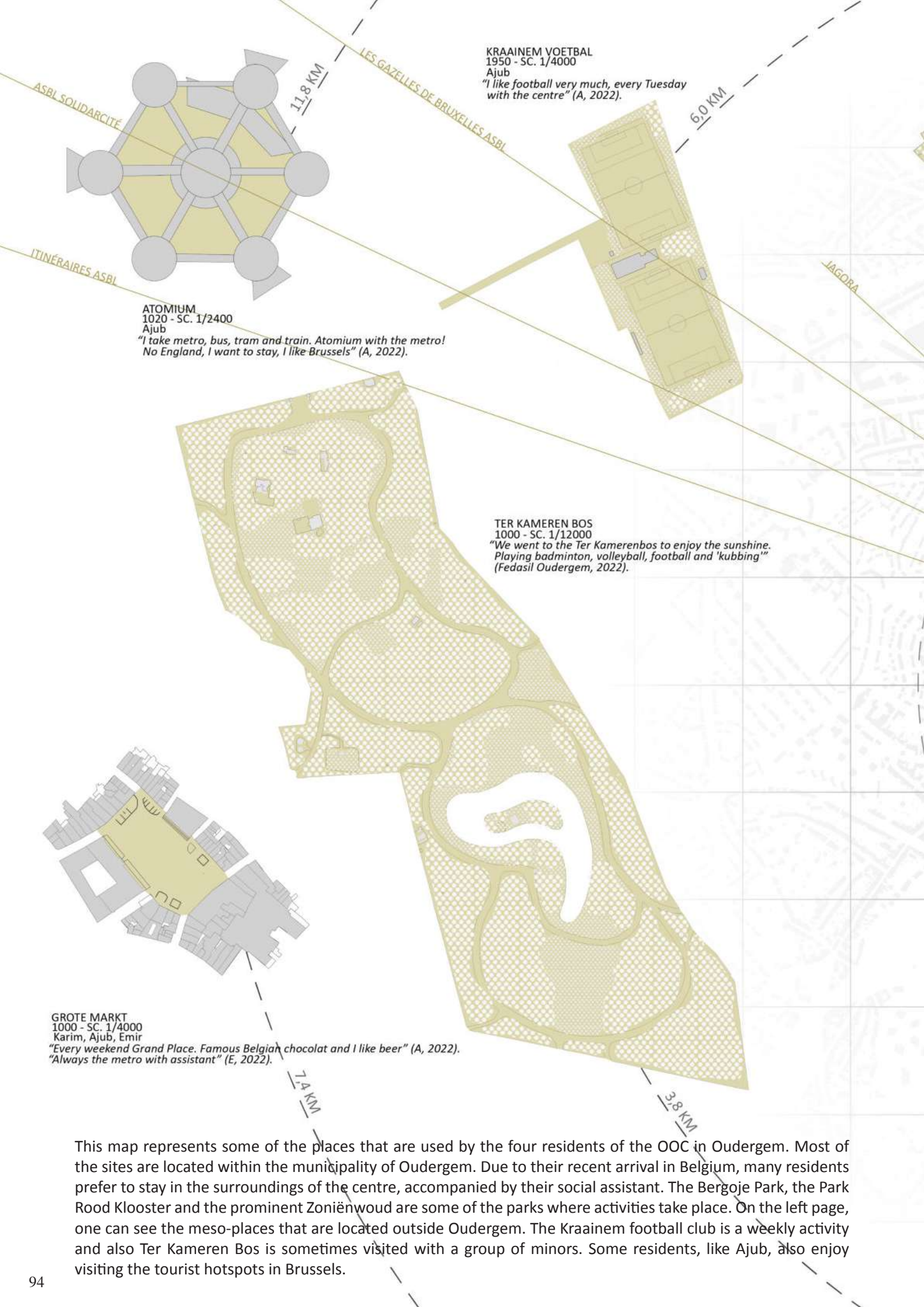
invite the boys to participate in a basketball initiation together with other local youngsters (F. Leysen, personal communication, 28 February, 2022).



#### Asbl Cheval et Forêt

examines the possibility of organising activities with their farm animals (F. Leysen, personal communication, 28 February, 2022).





This map represents some of the places that are used by the four residents of the OOC in Ouderghem. Most of the sites are located within the municipality of Ouderghem. Due to their recent arrival in Belgium, many residents prefer to stay in the surroundings of the centre, accompanied by their social assistant. The Bergoje Park, the Park Rood Klooster and the prominent Zoniënwood are some of the parks where activities take place. On the left page, one can see the meso-places that are located outside Ouderghem. The Kraainem football club is a weekly activity and also Ter Kameren Bos is sometimes visited with a group of minors. Some residents, like Ajub, also enjoy visiting the tourist hotspots in Brussels.



4. PARK ROOD KLOOSTER [29]  
1160 - SC. 1/8000

2.

3.

4.

1.

1. LOCAL SHOP [33]  
1160 - SC. 1/1200  
*"Sommige jongens gaan de buurtwinkel of de Carrefour" (G. Terras, 2022).*

3. BERGOJE PARK [28]  
1160 - SC. 1/6000  
*"The Community Centre Den Dam organised a game in Bergoje Park" (Fedasil Oudergem, 2022).*

0,3KM

2. CARREFOUR [36]  
1160 - SC. 1/6000

OOC  
1160 - SC. 1/2400

15 MIN. WALK

5. ZONIËNWOUDE [32]  
SC. 1/12000  
Joseph, Karim, Ajub, Emir  
*"I like to go to the woods to walk, because my mind is free. But always with assistant" (J, 2022).  
"I recognize the forest, but many dogs. I don't like them" (A, 2022).*



GROTE MARKT  
1000



TER KAMEREN BOS  
1000



ATOMIUM  
1020



KRAAINEM VOETBAL  
1950



These are the aerial pictures of the meso-places of the reception centre in Oudergem. What stands out are the green spaces in Oudergem, as well as the 'Ter Kamerenbos'. Sport seemed to be important for the minors. The parks are often used for this purpose, but activities such as football in Kraainem also appeal to them. For a visit to the city centre, most of the boys seemed to be accompanied by an assistant.

CARREFOUR  
1160



PARK ROOD KLOOSTER  
1160



LOCAL SHOP  
1160



BERGOJE PARK  
1160



ZONIËNWOU



### The history

The OOC in Oudergem opened in October 2021. The first visit took place shortly afterwards, on the 19th of November. Before it was converted in an observation and orientation centre, the building had already served four other functions throughout the past century, hosting different target groups. In 1936, two buildings were merged into a boarding school for children of sailors. After a few years, the function of the building changed to accommodate minors proceeding from the Juvenile Court of Justice. Later that century, the target group changed to minors who were no longer welcome at home, and eventually the building was transformed into a nursing home. Due to a lack of places in the existing OOCs, Fedasil currently rents this property from a private owner, to create a temporary Observation and Orientation Centre. The owner, however, does not seem to be willing to make any investments at all in the facility. The drainpipes, for example, have been damaged by the roots of the trees for some time, yet Fedasil will have to take care of this (G. Terras, personal communication, November 19, 2021). The floor plans used in this study were provided by director G. Terras, who requested them from the private owner. These include the functions of most of the spaces in the building.

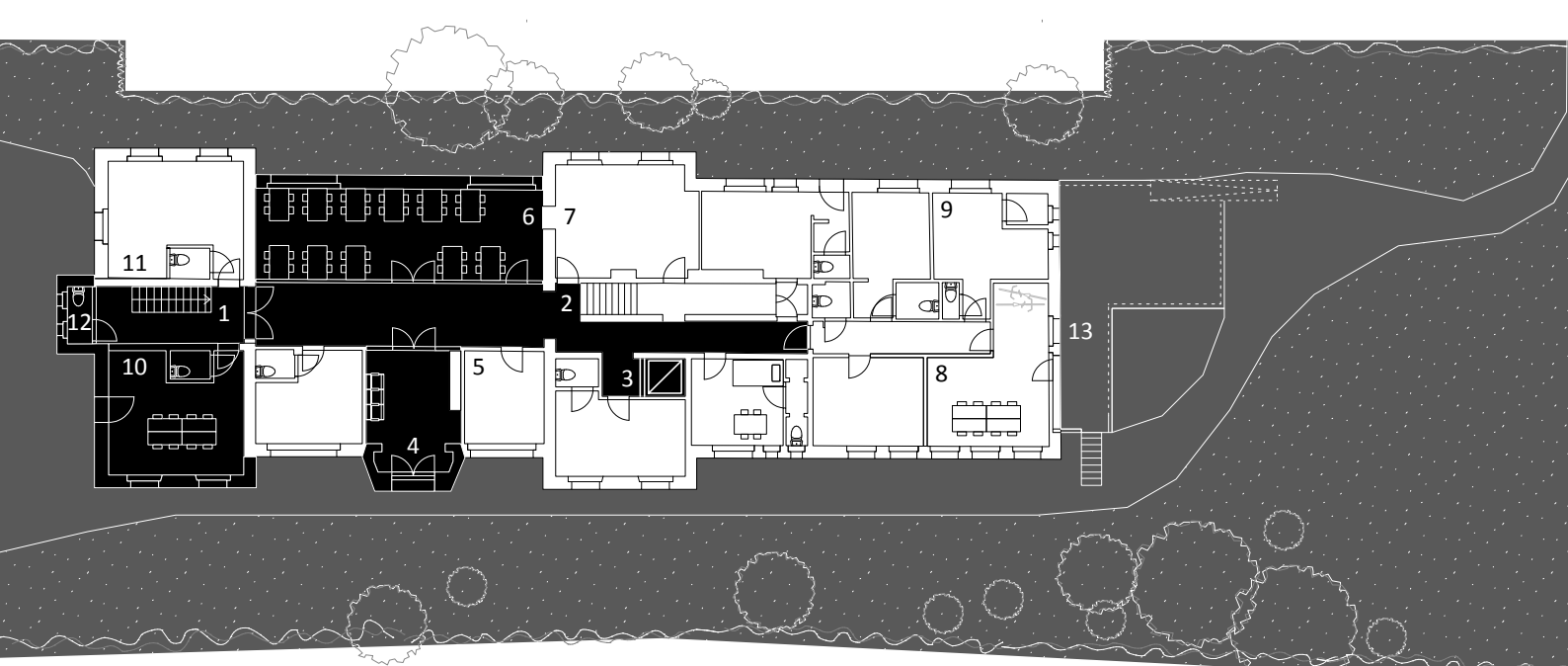
### The OOC

The OOC is located in a peaceful, residential area. From the street, the building is not directly visible due to the trees and a small house that was built in front of it. But if one follows the cobblestone driveway, which is located to the left from the ground plan on the following page, one will reach the centre after passing this house. The driveway continues along the centre to the back of the building, through the garden, where it connects to a cul-de-sac. The garden, visually isolated from the neighbours by a bunch of trees, consists of a grass field where the minors can play sports, and a large terrace. When following the driveway alongside the building, the main entrance can be found in the middle of the long façade. The entrance hall is connected to the reception desk so that the staff has a clear view of persons leaving the centre. On weekdays, leaving is allowed between 5 pm and 9 pm and at weekends from 9 am until 9 pm. Visitors, volunteers and members of the staff enter through these same doors. However, the staff can also enter the building through the staff canteen at the back of the building, under the terrace.

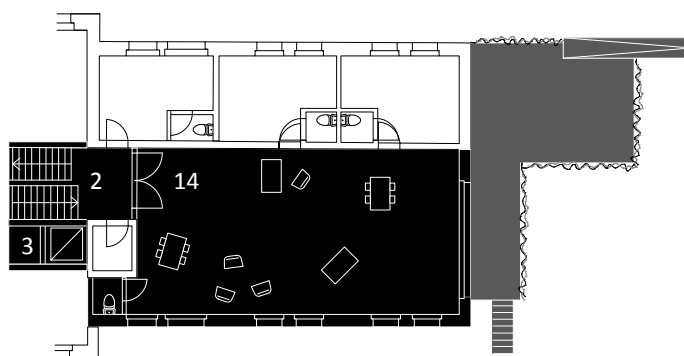
When entering the building through the main entrance, one arrives in front of the refectory. Director Terras explained that this collective space is too small for the number of inhabitants and the kitchen is equipped only with an oven, not a cooker, because the room was designed for catering only. It appears to be convenient that the refectory has one entrance only, so that the

staff can keep a good overview of who is entering and leaving (G. Terras, personal communication, November 19, 2021). A second collective space can be found on the ground floor at the end of the corridor. This is an animation room, which is also used for staff meetings. The rest of the ground floor is occupied with staff offices, a staff canteen, storage space, technical rooms, two staircases, an elevator out of service, the medical assistance and a space which has been transformed into a quarantaine room, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The building was constructed using split levels. When following staircase B, one arrives in the polyvalent room on the first floor. This is the largest collective space in the OOC and can host around 50 people (F. Leysen, personal communication, November 19, 2021). Consequently, many activities take place here, and so the furnishings are limited to a few tables and chairs, allowing for flexible use of the space. Furthermore, the space is adjacent to the terrace overlooking the garden.

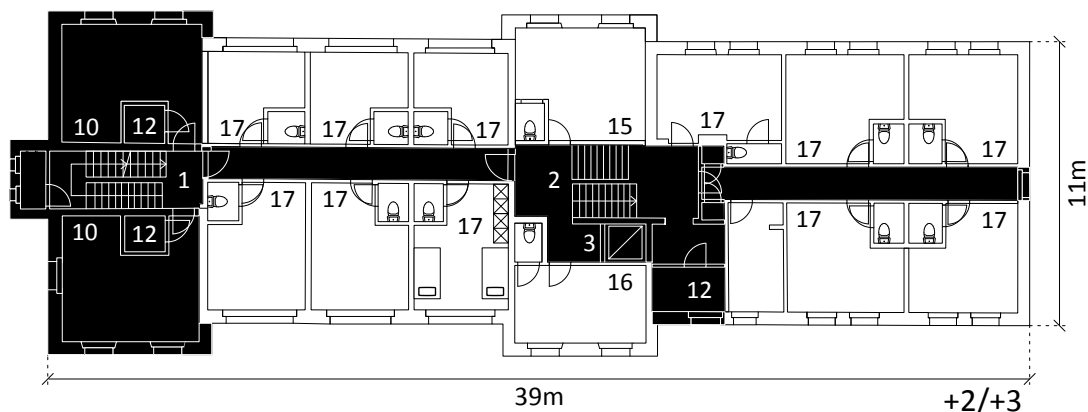
The last two floor levels are organised similarly. On both sides of the central corridor, the bedrooms are located. Most of them are arranged for four minors, with the exception of two rooms for three boys and one room for eight. On the second floor, in the middle of the corridor, there is an educator's office and an office for the psychologist. Furthermore, the OOC in Oudergem has a remarkable number of collective spaces available. On the second floor, two animation rooms can be found at the end of the corridor. Director G. Terras, however, explained that these corner spaces cannot be used as bedrooms due to fire safety regulations, because they lead directly into the staircase. Consequently, they were given the current function. The furnishing of these rooms appeared to be incomplete, consisting of a few tables and chairs or mattresses on the floor. However, this might have changed in the meantime as the centre had only been open for approximately one month at the time of the visit. The staff also testified that it was difficult to make the rooms cosy due to the fire safety requirements. For instance, Fedasil does not allow any wooden applications (G. Terras, personal communication, November 19, 2021). The highest (4th/5th) floor is arranged similar to the previous one. However, there is one bedroom less due to the "WiFi room and classroom". On the opposite side of the corridor one finds a meeting room where the staff can have private conversations with the residents and again, two animation rooms are located at the end of the corridor. Since each bedroom is equipped with a washbasin and a toilet, only the showers are shared among all residents. In total there are 7 showers in the building, which is, according to the staff, insufficient for the 60 residents (F. Leysen, personal communication, November 19, 2021). The exact location of these showers is, however, unknown from the floor plans provided.



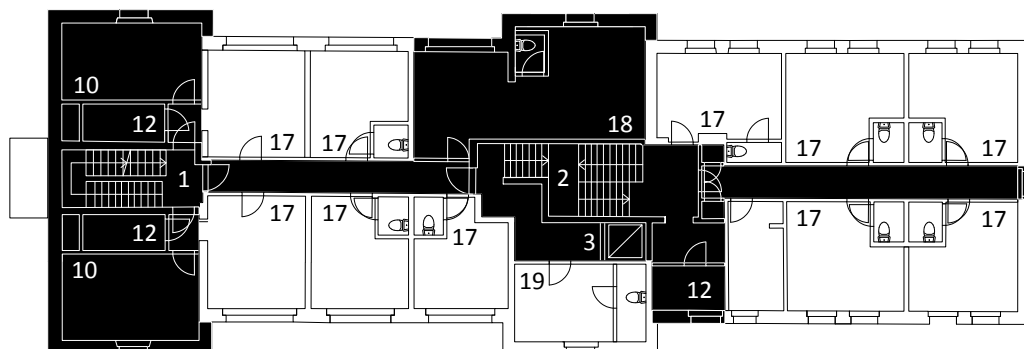
+0



+1



+2/+3



+4/+5

- 1. Staircase A
- 2. Staircase B
- 3. Elevator
- 4. Entrance
- 5. Reception
- 6. Refectory
- 7. Kitchen
- 8. Staff refectory
- 9. Medical assistance
- 10. Animation
- 11. Technical room
- 12. Toilet/shower
- 13. Terrace
- 14. Polyvalent room
- 15. Educator's office
- 16. Psychologist's office
- 17. Bedroom with sanitary
- 18. Wifi room and classroom
- 19. Meeting room

SC. 1/300 ●

- Collective space
- Outdoor space



Fig. 5 The refectory in Oudergem.



Fig. 6 "Animation room" furnished with a few mattresses.



Fig. 7 "Animation room" furnished with a few tables.



Fig. 8 Backyard in Oudergem.



Fig. 9 Shoes on the window sill of the bedrooms.



Fig. 10 Polyvalent room in Oudergem.



Fig. 11 Terrace adjacent to the polyvalent room.



### The rooms

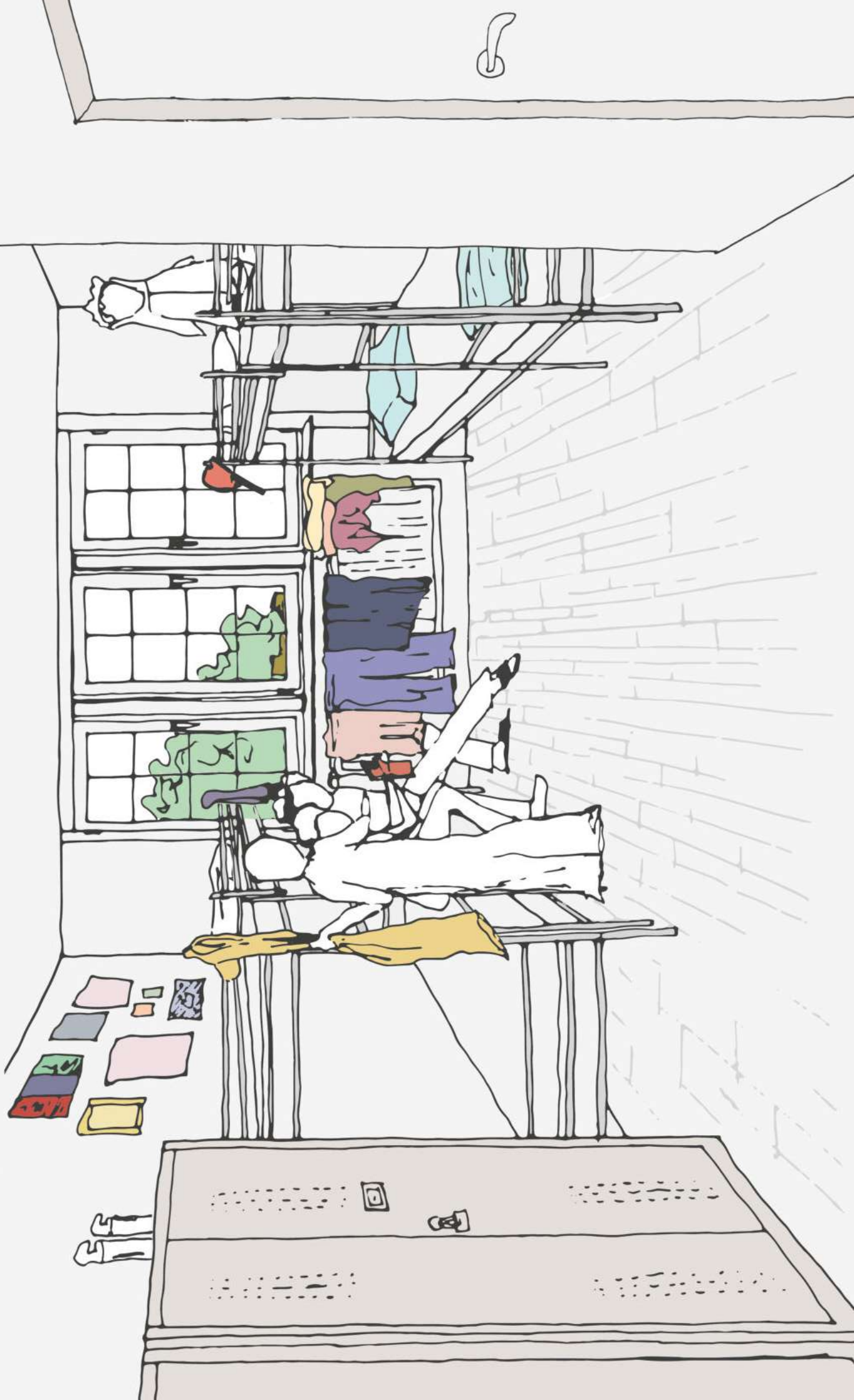
In the OOC of Oudergem, the bedrooms (pp. 104-105) of the unaccompanied minors are all very similar. With the exception of three rooms, all bedrooms are equipped for four persons. Joseph, Karim, Ajub and Emir all were assigned four-person rooms. The furniture in the rooms throughout the five case-studies in this study is very similar. Every time the same bunks beds and the same space-consuming metal lockers fill up the overcrowded bedrooms. The rooms in the OOC in Oudergem are quite spacious compared to those in the other centres, and are all equipped with a washbasin and a toilet. However, they are not large enough to add extra beds and lockers if the capacity were to be increased (F. Leysen, personal communication, November 19, 2021).

During the visit, there was an activity going on in the polyvalent room so that the bedrooms were empty and thus could be demonstrated by the assistant director. The rooms seemed not only spacious but also very clean, compared to testimonies from the other centres. “We get up, clean room and make bed” (Emir, personal communication, February 22, 2022). Moreover, every Friday is the big cleaning day, which was also the case on the day of the visit. The bedsheets are then changed and all the boys work together to clean up the building and their rooms (G. Terras, personal communication, November 19, 2021). As assistant director F. Leysen opened the bedroom, which had a wooden floor and beige-coloured walls, he explained that the bedrooms are sometimes locked during activities or information sessions in order to ensure that the boys are not continuously staying in bed. Thus the staff need not check the rooms and make sure the minors indeed attend the sessions organised for them. Two bunk beds were placed against the walls perpendicular to the facade. These beds were also used as clothing racks for towels and clothes. Trainers, however, were placed outside on the windowsill, to prevent unpleasant odors spreading in the bedroom. The lockers were placed at the entrance of the bedroom.

“I decorate! With pictures and paintings from activities”, explained one of the interviewees when he was invited to describe his room during the interview (Emir, personal communication, February 22, 2022). However, for others this did not seem worthwhile since the duration of their stay in an OOC is rather limited: “I don’t decorate, I go away in a month” (Ajub, personal communication, February 22, 2022). Some of the interviewees also talked about the lack of privacy they experience in the rooms, and Emir has difficulties communicating with his fellow roommates because of the language barrier. Other residents, like Ajub, do not spend much time in the bedroom. They prefer to participate in activities or go out of the centre independently whenever possible.



The rooms are arranged for four residents, with the exception of a few rooms for two or three minors. What is unique about the rooms in Oudergem is that they each have their own washbasin and toilet. The drawing is based on interviews with Ajub, Emir and Joseph and on observations.

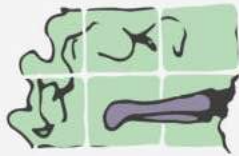


"I decorate!  
With pictures and paintings from activities" (Emir, 2022).



Curtains are missing  
(Observation, 2021).

The centre is located in a green and  
quiet neighbourhood (Observation, 2021).



The boys leave their trainers outside on the windowsill.  
So they do not bother their roommates (Observation, 2021).



"Hanging in room for  
YouTube and sleep"  
(Joseph, 2022).



Bunk beds are used as clothes racks (Observation, 2021).

"We get up, clean room and make bed" (Emir, 2022).

"Het zijn ruime kamer, hoewel niet ruim genoeg om bedden en lockers  
toe te voegen als de capaciteit wordt verhoogd" (F. Leysen, 2021).

"Elke kamer heeft een eigen toilet en wasbak" (G. Terras, 2021).

## Endnote Oudergem

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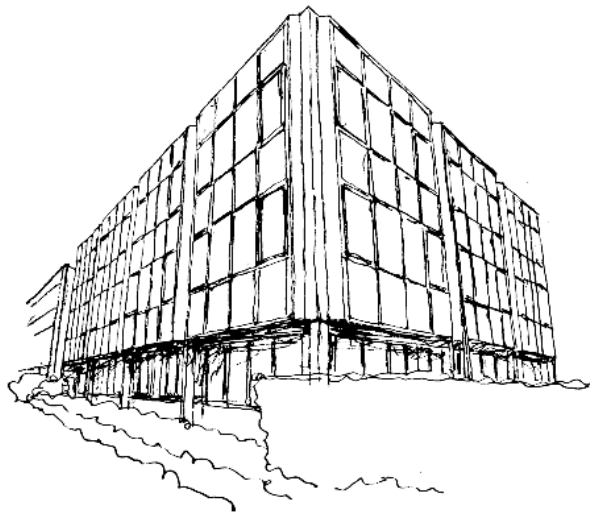
### Personal communication

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- Emir. (2022, February 22). Personal communication [Personal interview].
- Joseph. (2022, February 22). Personal communication [Personal interview].
- Karim. (2022, February 22). Personal communication [Personal interview].
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### Figures

- Fig. 1.: Own picture. (2021, November 19). The OOC in Oudergem [Photograph].
- Fig. 2.: PhotoNews. (2018, July 2). "Macro" image: the Zoniënwood covers half of the macro map of Oudergem [Photograph]. Bruzz. <https://www.bruzz.be/milieu/code-geel-voor-brandgevaar-zonienwood-2018-07-02>
- Fig. 3.: Google. (n.d.). [Google maps screenshot: "Meso" image: the park Rood Klooster is used for group activities]. <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kunstencentrum+Roodklooster/>
- Fig. 4.: Own picture. (2021, November 19). "Micro" image: refectory in the OOC [Photograph].
- Fig. 5.: Own picture. (2021, November 19). The refectory in Oudergem [Photograph].
- Fig. 6.: Own picture. (2021, November 19). "Animation room" furnished with a few mattresses [Photograph].
- Fig. 7.: Own picture. (2021, November 19). "Animation room" furnished with a few tables [Photograph].
- Fig. 8.: Own picture. (2021, November 19). Backyard in Oudergem [Photograph].
- Fig. 9.: Own picture. (2021, November 19). Shoes on the window sill of the bedrooms [Photograph].
- Fig. 10.: Own picture. (2021, November 19). Polyvalent room in Oudergem [Photograph].
- Fig. 11.: Own picture. (2021, November 19). Terrace adjacent to the polyvalent room [Photograph].





**CASE 3: ZAVENTEM**

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RECEPTION CENTRE

This former ING office building was converted into a temporal reception centre in 2016 as a response to the asylum crisis that started in the preceding year. Later on, the centre was closed when the need for additional reception places decreased. However, in January 2019, the centre was reopened to accommodate an increased influx of asylum seekers. The centre in Zaventem is an open centre and offers shelter, medical, social and legal assistance to asylum seekers during the processing of their request for international protection. It is a mixed centre, meaning it accommodates both men, women and families (Fedasil, n.d.).



**Type:** mixed reception centre

**Foundation:** 2019

**Architect:** unknown

**Owner:** private

**Scale:** 1000m<sup>2</sup> x 3 floors

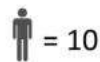
**Surroundings:** industrial zone

**Previous function:** office building

**Staff:**



**Volunteers:**



**Inhabitants:**

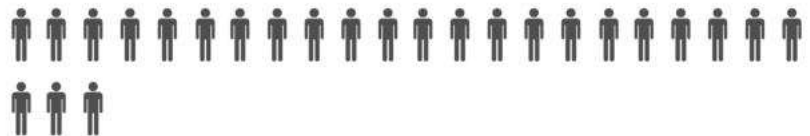


Fig. 1 The reception centre of Zaventem.



Fig. 2 "Macro" image: dominant road infrastructure in Zaventem (Wikipedia, 2008).



Fig. 3 "Meso" image: frequently used food shop in Zaventem.



Fig. 4 "Micro" image: corridor to the bedrooms.

## MACRO

The macro map of the reception centre in Zaventem (p. 112) contains about 80 social infrastructures. The different (sub)categories are more or less equally represented, with the exception of the subcategories “libraries”, “museums” and “cinema and theatre”, containing only one element or none at all. Thus the provision of cultural facilities within the “15-Minute City” is very limited. The range of schools [2-5] also seems rather modest considering that the centre accommodates families and both primary and secondary schools are therefore required. Koninklijk Atheneum Zaventem, however, is located just outside the macro map and this secondary school has an OKAN class. In the adjacent building there is a centre for adult education, the CVO [2], which offers a Dutch course for foreign-language speakers (Crescendo CVO, n.d.).

Although there are seven squares [6-12] and seven green spaces [13-19] in the area surrounding the reception centre, they are all of a limited size. The Woluweveld [19] differs from the other parks as it consists of a network of walking trails between agricultural fields. Several of these pathways are accessible from the industrial zone where the reception centre is located. The offer of food shops [20-30] and restaurants [31-49] that are affordable with the inhabitants’ weekly pocket money (€7.9) is quite extensive. These are mainly located to the east of the reception centre, where a linear concentration of social infrastructures can be noticed along the Stationsstraat and Vilvoordelaan (two streets connected by the Zaventem train station [78]).

As regards public transportation, only buses and trains are available. The bus stop [76] is near the reception centre. However, only four bus lines pass by and multiple residents testified that they had already missed appointments several times due to delays. E. Abdullah, neighbourhood coordinator of Fedasil Zaventem, explained that the residents pay for their bus pass themselves, which costs them about 25 euros per year (E. Abdullah, personal communication, November 3, 2021).

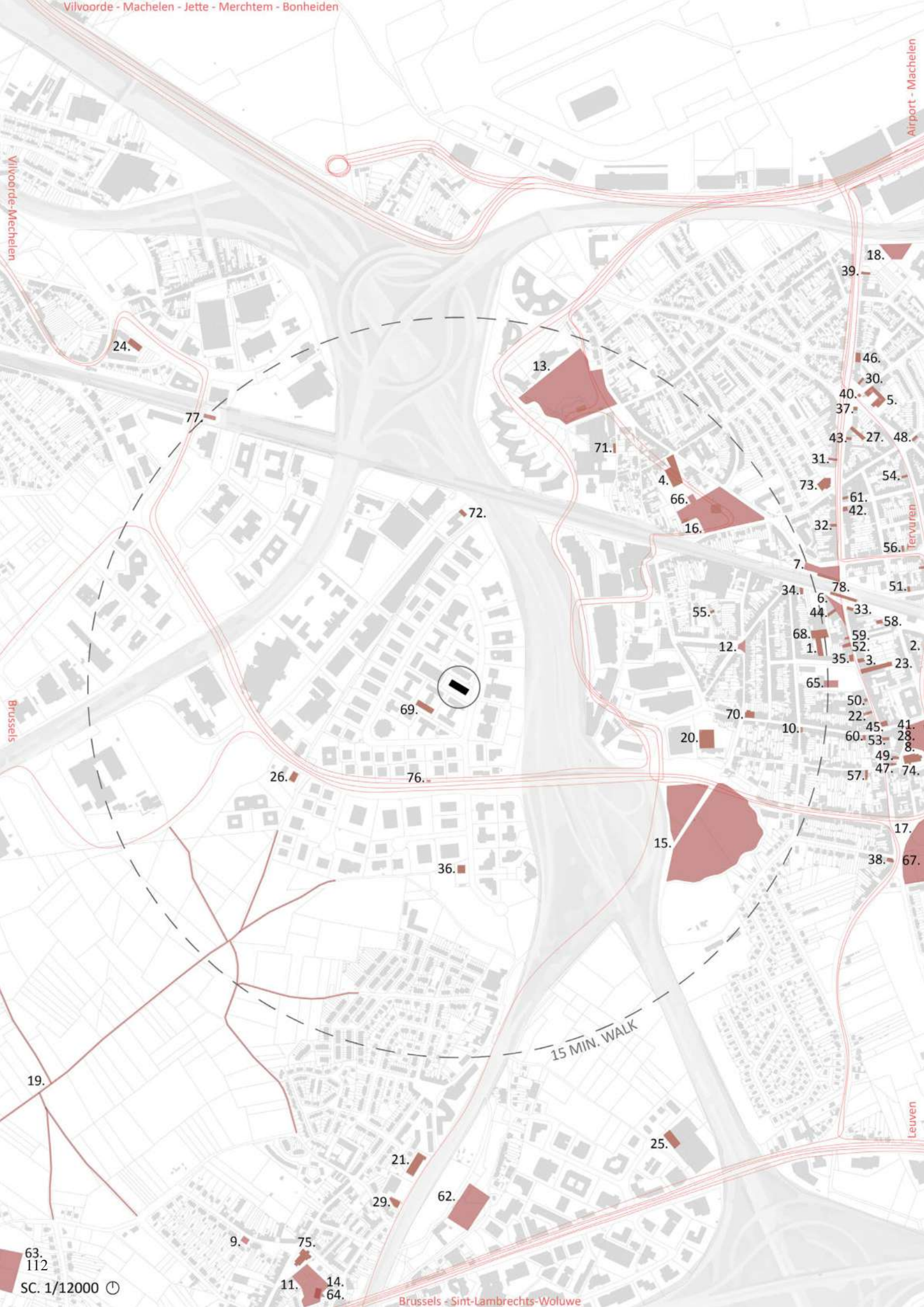
What is striking in the macro map of Zaventem is the network of road infrastructure. This forms a physical barrier to the mobility of the centre’s inhabitants. The route E40 isolates the industrial zone where the centre is located from the residential and commercial parts in the east of Zaventem. The bridge that connects these zones has no pavement over its entire length, so that the inhabitants have to walk on the road verge and even cross road exits to make the crossing. However, the other side can also be reached by various buses. During observations in the park [15] in front of Albert Heijn [20] an encounter took place with an Afghan boy who was holding a route description in his hand. He asked

for directions to the address written on his paper, namely that of the reception centre. He had assumed that the bridge was not the right pedestrian route as it seemed to be accessible only to car traffic. Neighbourhood coordinator E. Abdullah also testified: “Onze locatie is onze grootste handicap” (E. Abdullah, personal communication, November 3, 2021).



Fig. 5 There is no pavement when crossing the route E40 (Google Maps, n.d.).





## PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

### Libraries

- 1. Bibliotheek De Factorij

### Museums

None

### Schools

- 2. Cvo Volwassenenonderwijs
- 3. Gemeentelijke basisschool nr. 1
- 4. Gemeentelijke basisschool
- 5. ZAVO

### Squares

- 6. Heldenplein
- 7. Karel Quitmannplein
- 8. Parking kerkplein
- 9. Square Kleine Bosstraat
- 10. Square Kleine Daalstraat
- 11. Square Liekendaalpark
- 12. Square Papierfabrieksstraat

### Parks and forests

- 13. Crowne Plaza Park
- 14. Liekendaalpark
- 15. Park in front of Albert Heijn
- 16. Park townhall Zaventem
- 17. Park Van Zaventem
- 18. Strebelle "Flight in Mind"
- 19. Woluweveld

## COMMERCE

### Food shops

- 20. Albert Heijn
- 21. Aldi
- 22. Aziatische supermarkt
- 23. Carrefour
- 24. Carrefour Express
- 25. Collect & go
- 26. Esso shop
- 27. Louis Delhaize
- 28. Markt Zaventem
- 29. Spar
- 30. Zaventem Express

### Restaurants [< € 7,9]

- 31. Adria grill
- 32. Bar Marcel
- 33. Big Tom's Bar
- 34. Café New Seventy Seven
- 35. Café 't Volkshuis
- 36. Cosmopolite
- 37. De Briefing
- 38. Domino's Pizza
- 39. Eat & Fly
- 40. Fritpleintje Zaventem

- 41. Frituur Rapide
- 42. Picasso
- 43. Pizzeria La Ora
- 44. Snack Antalya
- 45. Snack Bodrum
- 46. Snack Express
- 47. Taverne De Uiver
- 48. Transit Café
- 49. Vinograd

### Hair salons and barbers

- 50. Barbershop Candel
- 51. BE VEGETAL
- 52. Dehairs/Christel
- 53. Haar Atelier Zaventem
- 54. Hair Cube
- 55. Hairstyling Cindy
- 56. Hairstyle PAUL Zaventem
- 57. Hair zensation
- 58. Kapsalon D-Coiff
- 59. Master Kapsalon
- 60. Milonton/Johnny
- 61. WE Hairdressers

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Sports facilities

- 62. Football Frans Smoldersstraat
- 63. Kv Woluwe Zaventem
- 64. Sports field Liekendaalpark
- 65. Sports field Rustoordreef
- 66. Sports field townhall
- 67. Zwembad De Motte

### Cinema and theatre

- 68. Cultuurcentrum De Factorij

## RELIGION

- 69. Kerk van God Ministerieel van Jezus Christus Internationaal
- 70. Moskee Othman Zaventem
- 71. OM België
- 72. Praca Moskee
- 73. Sint-Jozefkerk
- 74. Sint-Martinuskerk
- 75. Sint-Stefaanskerk

## TRANSIT

- A. Bus \_\_\_\_\_ direction
- 76. Bus stop Henneau/Excelsior

### B. Train

- 77. Train station Diegem
- 78. Train station Zaventem

### The interviewees

Four residents were interviewed at the Zaventem reception centre on 25 February 2022. Haroun and Abel are single men in their thirties who come from Yemen and Ethiopia respectively. Darlita is a young mother from Armenia and lastly, 72-year-old Hadiya from Mali was interviewed. At the time of the interview, they had respectively been living in the reception centre for five months, six months, two months and three years. In addition, the study also draws on the insights of neighbourhood coordinator E. Abdullah. Without their testimonies, the meso and micro analysis would not have been possible.

Haroun is a young man from Yemen who was a Master's student in Project Management in Malaysia, before he was able to move to Europe at a second attempt. After a four-day stay in Klein Kasteeltje, Haroun was transferred to the Zaventem reception centre where he is trying to continue his studies. The second interviewee is called Abel. For his marriage plans, he took a flight from his home country Ethiopia towards Belgium. But after spending a month in Leuven, these plans were cancelled. However, Abel decided to stay in the country and request asylum. Back in Ethiopia, Abel worked as a teacher at a High School for the topic "Ethical Education". As this subject does not exist in Belgium and his diploma is not recognised here, he cannot work in the education sector. He is therefore currently studying Dutch in order to expand his opportunities on the employment market. The third interview was conducted with the Armenian Darlita. With her parents, she had been living for about ten years in Antwerp, and later Brussels, where she worked as a hairdresser. In 2019, Darlita returned to Armenia to get married but barely two years later they applied for asylum in Belgium due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Now she is living in the Zaventem reception centre with her husband and one-year-old daughter. The last resident to take part in the interview was 72-year-old Hadiya, from Mali. This woman too had previously lived in Brussels for many years; in the 1970s as a student, and later on as the wife of Mali's ambassador. When her husband returned to Mali for his work, Hadiya decided to stay in Belgium for medical reasons. Almost three years ago, this grandmother and her 16-year-old grandson moved out of their flat in Kraainem, registered at Klein Kasteeltje and moved to Zaventem the same day. After a denial of their asylum application, they have appealed.

### The map

The meso map of the Zaventem reception centre (pp. 116-117) was created based on the interviews with the four residents. First there are the meso places that are located in or around the 15-Minute City of the reception centre. Het Park van Zaventem [5] is a first popular

place among residents. Abel comes here to find some peace or to jog and Hadiya likes to walk around. Haroun also knows the place. The park is located between a commercial and a residential area and is just outside a 15-minute walk from the centre. It is an elongated, urban park of about 4.5 hectares. The site is divided into several areas, around which pathways wind. A first basin occupies a considerable part of the park's surface. Although this place is the most significant park in the municipality, it is only a place of rest with little space for sports or exercise. The inhabitants of the reception centre can easily reach the park by bus. On foot, there is no other possibility but to cross the route E40 via the bridge, that is not pedestrian-friendly and has already been discussed in the macro analysis. Hadiya also referred to this inconvenience: "Ce serait bien d'avoir un trottoir!" (Hadiya, personal communication, February 25, 2022). The same road leads to the Albert Heijn [1], a popular supermarket for all four residents. To reach this Dutch supermarket, one can also take a bus from the Fedasil reception centre. In front of the Albert Heijn supermarket, on the other side of the traffic road, lies a second park [4], the name of which is undetermined. The size of the park seems considerable at first sight, but only 1.8 hectares of the ground plan is open to the public. The accessible area consists of a number of hills with winding paths in between. The bicycle highway F3 cuts right through the park, leaving a triangular section of the park as a residual space where vegetation takes over. Another triangular area is a water basin, which is also inaccessible due to a fence. During the interviews, three more places in Zaventem were mentioned, all three located just outside a 15-minute radius from the reception centre. First there is CVO [3], an adult education centre, located at the railway station on the same plot as the Koninklijk Atheneum van Zaventem. Twice a week Abel takes Dutch language classes there in the evening "because it is important for jobs" (Abel, personal communication, February 25, 2022). In addition to the Albert Heijn [1], many residents shop at the Aldi [2]. The shop with outdoor parking only occupies the western part of the building block. Finally, the Stationsstraat and Vilvoordelaan [6], where a concentration of social infrastructures was observed on the macro scale, are streets where Hadiya likes to go. For example, she visits the bookstore and the bank.

However, none of the four interviewees spends exclusively their time in Zaventem. They regularly take the bus to more urban areas such as Vilvoorde or Brussels. For example, hotspots such as the Grote Markt in Brussels City were repeatedly mentioned during the interviews with the four inhabitants. Both Darlita and Hadiya, who have known the capital for years, also frequently go to different markets in Brussels because

they find certain food products there. Darlita goes to Bockstael and Hadiya visits both the market on Dumont square in Sint-Pieters-Woluwe and the one on Saint-Julien square in Oudergem. “Je fais le tour des marchés s’il fait beau!” (Hadiya, personal communication, February 25, 2022). She also goes to the Nieuwstraat in search of African food. Furthermore, Hadiya likes to visit the Botanique park at the edge of the Pentagon in Saint-Josse-ten-Noode. Haroun also goes to Brussels, more specifically to Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, to meet acquaintances and for the Arabic restaurants, markets and shops. The Gentse Steenweg is an example of such a street in Molenbeek with numerous ethnic (food) shops. Food appears to be a recurring theme and reason for urban travel, but on the other hand, there are also places that are rather avoided. The only place that Haroun systematically avoids is Brussels North Station: “There are criminals, homeless people” (Haroun, personal communication, February 25, 2022).

### The network

For its activities and other forms of support, the centre in Zaventem relies on a varied network of organisations. These are both local organisations active within the municipality as well as national or international ones. They are mostly psychosocial collaborations. An overview of the most important ones is listed to the right.

**Tumult**  
is a youth work organisation that encourages young people to meet each other, across the borders of differences (Tumult, n.d.). It introduces the children in the centre to the leisure facilities in Zaventem.



**Globe Aroma**  
is an artistic work and meeting place that offers space, time and a network to artists and art lovers with a newcomer’s background (Globe Aroma, n.d.).



**Group Intro**  
is focused on personal growth. An inclusive society is their goal. They do this through employment, training, coaching and advice (Groep Intro, 2021).



**Gave Veste vzw**  
tries to bring Christian communities and refugees into contact with each other. They help refugees by providing assistance and guidance (Gave Veste, n.d.).



**Johnson & Johnson**  
is an American multinational company for medical devices, pharmaceuticals and consumer packaged goods (Wikipedia, 2021). They make donations but also help, for example, in the search for work.



**Buurthuis Mozaïek**  
invite the residents of the centre to cook for the neighbourhood on a weekly basis, to stimulate interaction with local residents (Fedasil Zaventem, n.d.).



**International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation**  
was established to give a voice to the voiceless through the arts. It serves as a basis for many socio-cultural projects (Menuhin Foundation, 2020).



**Gemeente Zaventem**  
assists the centre with the help of its integration service, sports service and youth service. For example, they organise bicycle training (Fedasil Zaventem, n.d.).



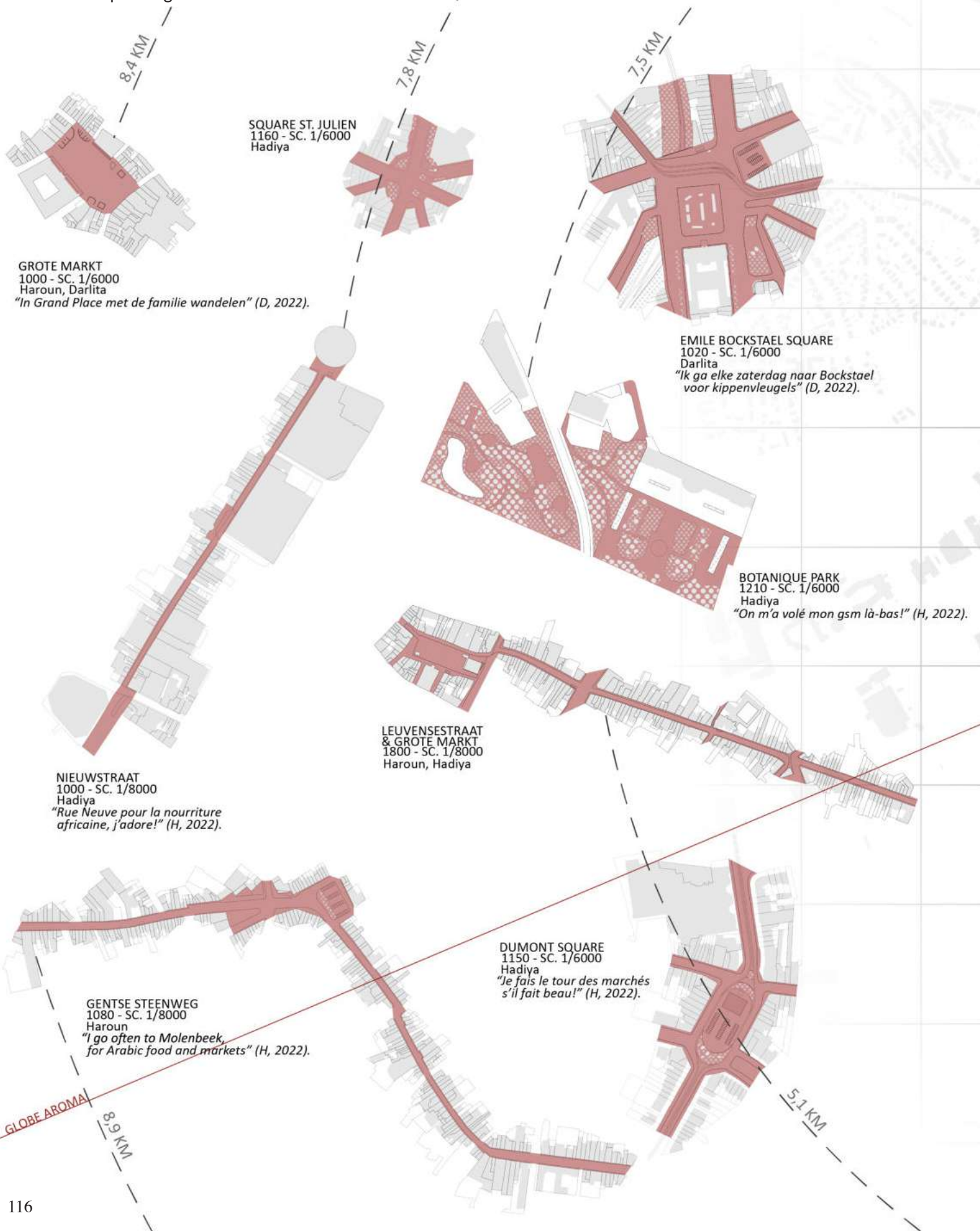
**Huis van het Kind Zaventem**  
is a cooperation in which different partner organisations together provide an offer that supports families with children and young people (Zaventem, n.d.).



**Kind en Gezin Zaventem**  
is an organisation where parents-to-be and families with children can go for preventive care. Parents also receive practical and professional advice on psycho-social or pedagogical issues (Sociale Kaart, n.d.).



This map presents the floor plans of the sites that the four interviewees at the Zaventem reception centre use in their day-to-day lives. On the right, surrounding the centre, the places in and near the 15-Minute City are shown. In short, these include two parks, two supermarkets, an adult education centre and the commercial main street of Zaventem. The frequently visited places outside the municipality are presented on the left of the map. Outside Zaventem, they mostly seek urbanity, and also nutrition appears to be a motive for urban travel. The scale, the postal code of the municipality and the interviewees who used the place are mentioned for each floor plan. The corresponding macro number is also mentioned where relevant.





6. STATIONSTRAAT & VILVOORDELAAN  
1930 - SC. 1/8000  
Hadiya  
*"Oui, le Stationstraat pour la librairie et la banque" (H, 2022).*

3. CVO EDUCATION [2]  
1930 - SC. 1/3000  
Abel

RECEPTION CENTRE  
1930 - SC. 1/4000

300M

2. ALDI  
1930 - SC. 1/2400  
Haroun, Abel, Darlita, Hadiya

1. ALBERT HEIJN [20]  
1930 - SC. 1/2400  
Haroun, Abel, Hadiya

4. PARK IN FRONT OF ALBERT HEIJN [15]  
1930 - SC. 1/4000  
Abel  
*"I walk and sit here" (A, 2022).*

5. PARK VAN ZAVENTEM [17]  
1930 - SC. 1/4000  
Haroun, Abel, Hadiya  
*"So nice location and surroundings because it is quiet" (A, 2022).*

SC. 1/12000

BOTANIQUE PARK  
1210



NIEUWSTRAAT  
1000



GENTSESTEENWEG  
1080



GROTE MARKT  
1000



BOCKSTAELE MARKET  
1020



DUMON MARKET  
1150



MARKET ST JULIEN  
1160



GROTE MARKT  
1800



The aerial images illustrate that the inhabitants of the reception centre primarily look for urbanity outside Zaventem, which they can only find to a limited extent within their municipality. These are mostly squares and junctions where activities such as markets take place. The images also give an indication of the materiality and spatiality of the infrastructures.

ALBERT HEIJN  
1930



ALDI  
1930



CVO  
1930



VILVOORDELAAN-STATIONSSTRAAT  
1930



PARK IN FRONT OF ALBERT HEIJN  
1930



PARK VAN ZAVENTEM  
1930





The Fedasil reception centre in Zaventem is a large-scale accommodation near Brussels. The property is a former ING office located in an industrial area and was converted into a temporary reception centre. Fedasil has been renting the building from a Brussels real estate agency since 2019. Today, the centre accommodates some 250 asylum seekers, including single men, single women and families (Fedasil, n.d.). E. Abdullah provided the floor plans of the reception centre in Zaventem, including the functions of the majority of the rooms. This was completed with information from observations. The plans only show the functions and furnishings that could be determined with some degree of certainty.

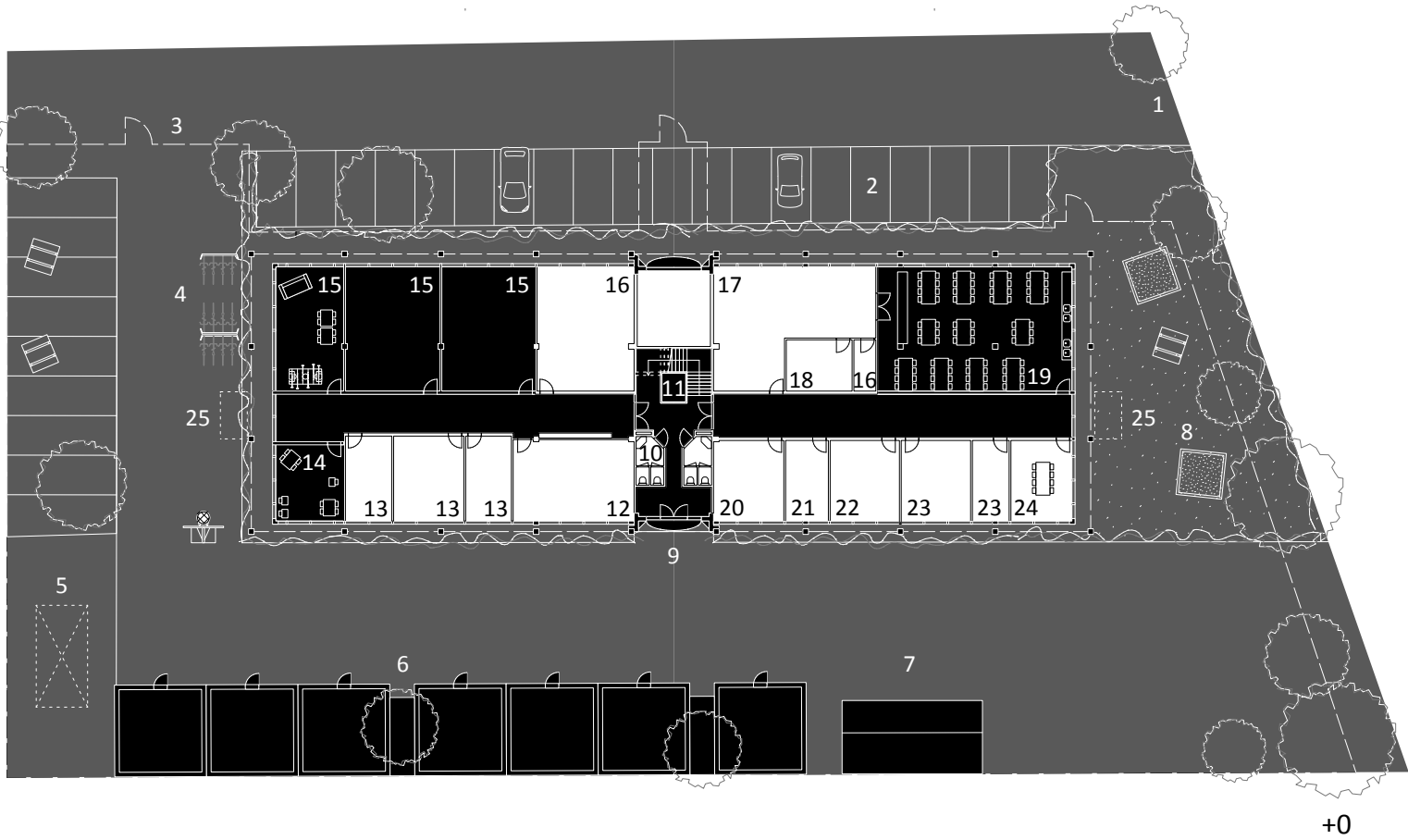
#### The reception centre

Surrounded by other office buildings, the reception centre occupies a typical plot in the neighbourhood, characterised by a large number of parking lots and a small amount of vegetation. A fence has been built along the perimeter of the building, which remains open at night for residents working night shifts. Once inside the fence, there are a few picnic tables, a small bicycle shed, some fitness equipment that is typically found in parks and a playground for children. Around the corner, some containers with sanitary facilities were placed on former parking lots. Several residents experience this outdoors location as a discomfort, as there is not even a sink available inside the building, except in the collective canteen. Darlita finds “het sanitair niet leuk, dan moet ik mannen passeren en dat vind ik niet comfortabel” (Darlita, personal communication, February 25, 2022). Next to the last container is another picnic table, covered by a tent. This is mainly used by smokers when it rains (E. Abdullah, personal communication, November 3, 2021). Fedasil’s house rules prohibit smoking inside the centres, except in the designated areas (Fedasil, 2022). Finally, outside at the street side, there are two boxes for kitchen gardening on the small green area. “Surtout avec des herbes, et pour tout le monde!” (Hadiya, personal communication, February 25, 2022).

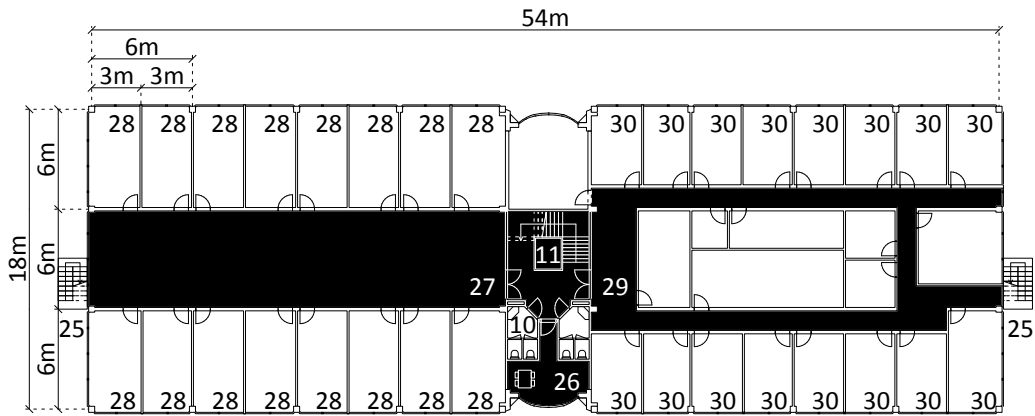
The main entrance is facing the containers. Inside the building, sanitary facilities can be found on each floor around this entrance. However, this is exclusively for residents who are considered vulnerable. Young mothers and elderly people get the key to sanitary inside the building but the keys are handed over to others (Hadiya, personal communication, February 25, 2022). In the north-west wing of the ground floor is the reception and administration area. Every resident or volunteer can come here for information. The residents can also register here to do community work, in order to earn some extra pocket money (€2/hour). Furthermore, there are a number of collective spaces in this wing. One of these is an animation room that offers various activities. “There is a TV

room, but in there you’ll also find a pool table, games, a kicker table, a small library, some couches... There are too many activities for one room. When I want to watch television, others are playing at the pool table in front of me.” (Abel, personal communication, February 25, 2022). A second collective space at the end of the corridor is set up as a quiet room. This room was introduced at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, which made cohabitation in the centre even more difficult. However, Abel testified that the objective of this space is not always respected. “People come to call there and they don’t respect the quietness. But it is very difficult for everyone; most of the residents have stress, are angry or can even become aggressive so you cannot always say something about it.” (Abel, personal communication, February 25, 2022). In this room, once a week, a homework class is organised for the children who usually study on the bed in their room. Opposite the quiet room is another animation room, furnished with a few tables and chairs and a kicker table. Although in theory it is accessible to every resident, very few women go there. E. Abdullah explained that they try to reserve this room exclusively for women one evening a week. In the other wing, there are offices for the staff and the medical service. At the end of the corridor there is also the staff canteen, which is converted twice a week into a kitchen for the residents, who can use it upon reservation. Across the hall is the canteen where the inhabitants can get a meal three times a day. The rest of the day it remains accessible for water, coffee or the use of the microwave ovens. Since the pandemic, meals may also be consumed in the room. “Je prends chaque fois le prochain repas car je préfère manger mes repas dans ma chambre, sur mon lit” (Hadiya, personal communication, February 25, 2022).

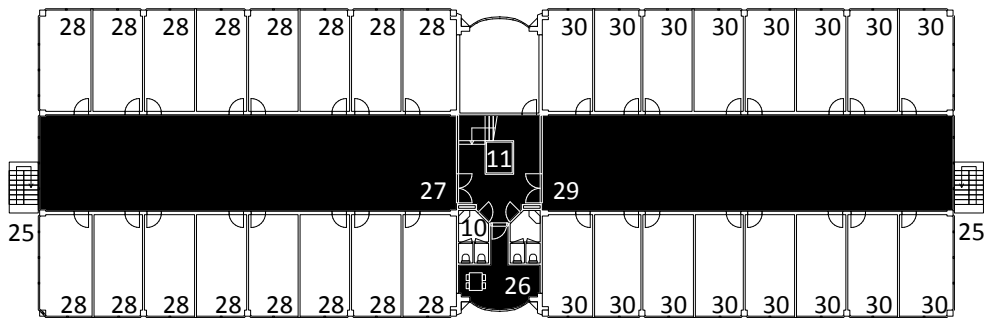
On the first floor are the bedrooms. Behind the sanitary facilities for vulnerable residents is a small study room. “But the few study rooms are often occupied” (Abel, personal communication, February 25, 2022). The width of the men’s wing is divided into two rooms of six metres, separated by an equally large corridor. “I paint on the walls in the corridor. I want to make it feel like my home as much as possible” (Abel, personal communication, February 25, 2022). The corridor is used as a play area by children. The wing for women and families has a similar structure, but the wide hall here has been replaced by an island of spaces, including a clothing store. As a result, the rooms are smaller and accommodate one family or a few single women. The second floor is similar, except for the large corridor in the women’s wing: “Si je n’ai pas assez marché de la journée, je fais des pas dans le hall quand la plupart des habitants dorment déjà” (Hadiya, personal communication, February 25, 2022).



+0



+1



+2

- 1. Entrance Fedasil
- 2. Parking
- 3. Fence
- 4. Bicycle shed
- 5. Playground
- 6. Sanitary
- 7. Tent
- 8. Kitchen garden
- 9. Entrance building
- 10. Toilets for vulnerable people

- 11. Staircase
- 12. Reception
- 13. Assistance
- 14. Quiet room
- 15. Animation
- 16. Storage
- 17. Kitchen
- 18. Provisioning
- 19. Refectory
- 20. Manager's office

- 21. Medical assistance
- 22. Accountant
- 23. Office
- 24. Staff refectory
- 25. Fire escape
- 26. Study room
- 27. Men's wing
- 28. Men's room
- 29. Women's wing
- 30. Women's or family room

■ Collective space  
 ■ Outdoor space

SC. 1/450 ●



Fig. 6 The garden at the street side.

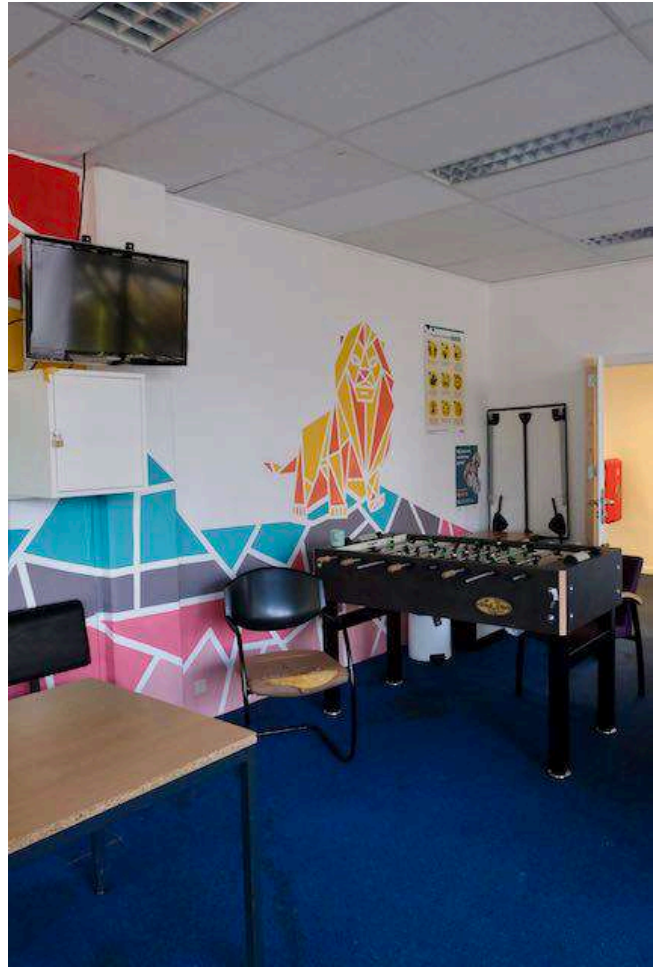


Fig. 7 Animation room on the ground floor.



Fig. 8 Corridor towards the refectory.

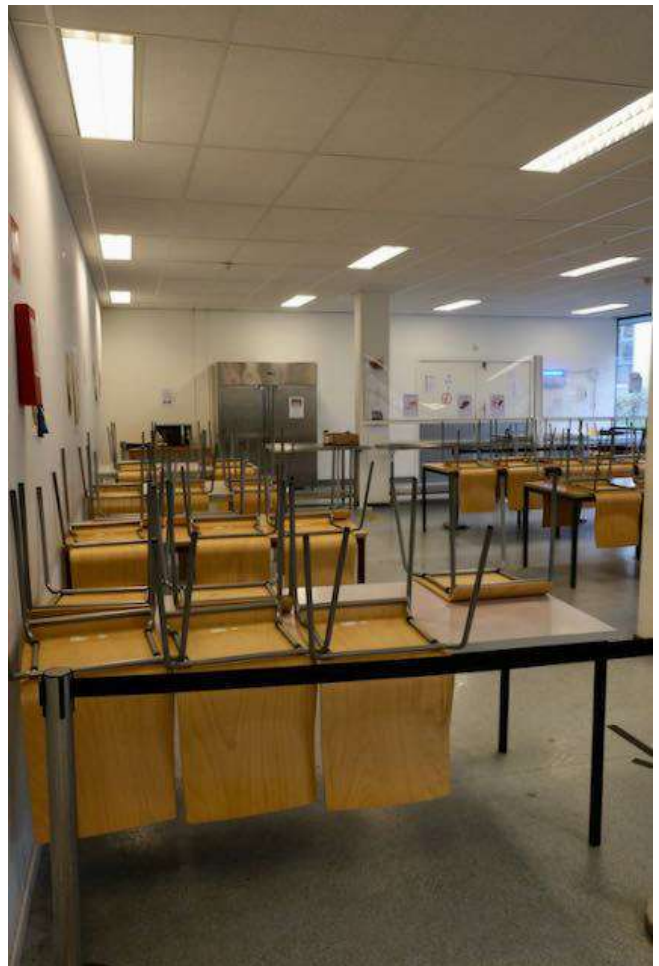


Fig. 9 Refectory for the residents.



Fig. 10 Containers with sanitary facilities. Note the bags hanging out the windows.



Fig. 11 Corridor in the men's wing.



Fig. 12 Abel painting the corridors, edited by authors (Fedasil Zaventem, 2021).



### The rooms

In the Fedasil reception centre in Zaventem, there are two types of bedrooms: one bedroom for single men or single women, and one bedroom for a family. The two types of rooms (pp. 126-129) are illustrated by means of a sketch based on the testimonies of the four interviewees. The first sketch represents a room for single men, based on the statements of Abel and Haroun. The second sketch illustrates the family rooms of Darlita and Hadiya.

The first bedroom (pp. 126-127) houses six single men or women. Due to an insufficient number of reception places, the capacity of the centre in Zaventem has been increased. As a result, there are only a few rooms left arranged for four persons only. The furniture available to single women (around 50 residents) and single men (around 120 residents) consist of three bunk beds and personal lockers. There is no table, chair or sink. Barely 10m<sup>2</sup> of free surface remains in these rooms for the six inhabitants. "There is no privacy at all. Some use their bedcovers to create a wall." (Haroun, personal communication, February 25, 2022). One locker per person leads to a shortage of storage space, so users improvise other ways to store their belongings. "Not nearly everything fits in one locker, so we have to keep things on the bed" (Abel, personal communication, February 25, 2022). Haroun shared his disgust about the hygiene conditions in the bedroom: "Some stock their food under the bed. When they forget, I collect the food and throw it out." (Haroun, personal communication, February 25, 2022). The inhabitants often put their personal food stocks in plastic bags hanging out the window to keep them cool. "Vous avez sûrement vu nos frigos locaux!" (Hadiya, personal communication, February 25, 2022). After three months, as a consequence of repeated conflicts, Abel was transferred to a four-person room (coming from a six-person room). Nevertheless, co-habitation remains a difficult challenge, even in these smaller rooms. This can, among many factors, be explained by different habits, cultures and mentalities, but language barriers and different sleep schedules also play a role.

In the wings where the single women are housed, there are also family rooms. Rooms for single men and women are all similarly furnished with the same bunk beds and lockers. Meanwhile family rooms (pp. 128-129) are furnished according to the family's dimensions. Darlita shares a bedroom with her husband and one-year-old daughter. The couple has two single beds pushed together and a crib for the baby. Since they only share the room with the three of them, it is quite spacious compared to the rooms for singles. However, a lack of privacy was also mentioned here: "Muren als papier, mijn kind kan niet slapen" (Darlita, personal

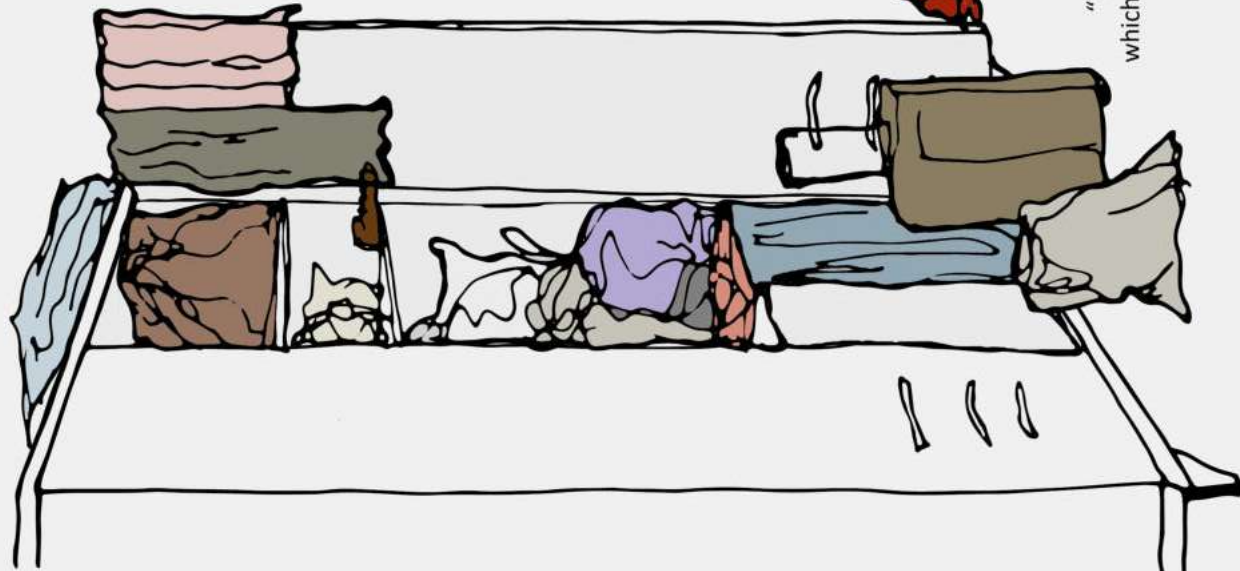
communication, February 25, 2022). Several families with young children live next to each other in former offices without the rooms being adapted to offer needed sound insulation. Such issues pose challenges to cohabitation in the family wing. Nevertheless, several interviewees try to make their stay as pleasant as possible, for example by keeping their room tidy on a daily basis. Abel regularly tidies his entire room, and every day he makes his own bed as well as those of his roommates. But although Darlita repeatedly cleans their family room, she has difficulty keeping it clean: "Jammer want we eten dus op bed, alles snel vuil, ik kuis heel veel, ik zou graag een tafel hebben" (Darlita, personal communication, February 25, 2022). But the family rooms in the Zaventem reception centre do not have a chair or table either. Furthermore, Darlita cooks 80% of the meals herself in her room on an electric fire. However, the house rules state that this is not allowed: "It is forbidden to cook in the reception centre, except in the rooms that the reception centre may have designated for this purpose" (Fedasil, 2022). Darlita is aware of the offence but considers "het eten in het centrum niet goed en zonder smaak" (Darlita, personal communication, February 25, 2022). Hadiya also stays in a family room, which she shares with her 16-year-old grandson. They also have two single beds and two lockers. To create a minimum of privacy, they moved the furniture in the room. "J'ai créé une barrière avec les deux casiers entre mon environnement et celui de mon petit-fils, car il est terriblement désordonné" (Hadiya, personal communication, February 25, 2022). Hadiya also set up a yoga and prayer corner and bought some plants to decorate the room.

This drawing is based on a photo of a room in the centre and the testimonies of Abel and Haroun. They sleep in the men's wing of the building, where the rooms are arranged for 6 or exceptionally 4 people.



"Not nearly everything fits in one locker, so we have to keep things on the bed" (Abel, 2022).

"I only go in my room to sleep, others stay there all day and eat and smoke there" (Abel, 2022).



"It is not easy to sleep, they have no respect. They play music or make calls at night" (Abel, 2022).

"I make my roommates' beds because I find it mentally difficult to continuously see disorder" (Abel, 2022).



"They leave their clothes lying around" (Haroun, 2022).

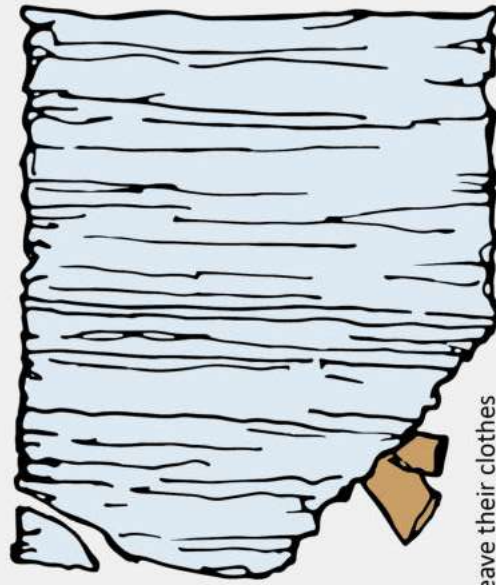
"Some store food under the bed, which attracts small animals" (Abel, 2022).



"They go in with their shoes on, which causes a smell..." (Haroun, 2022).

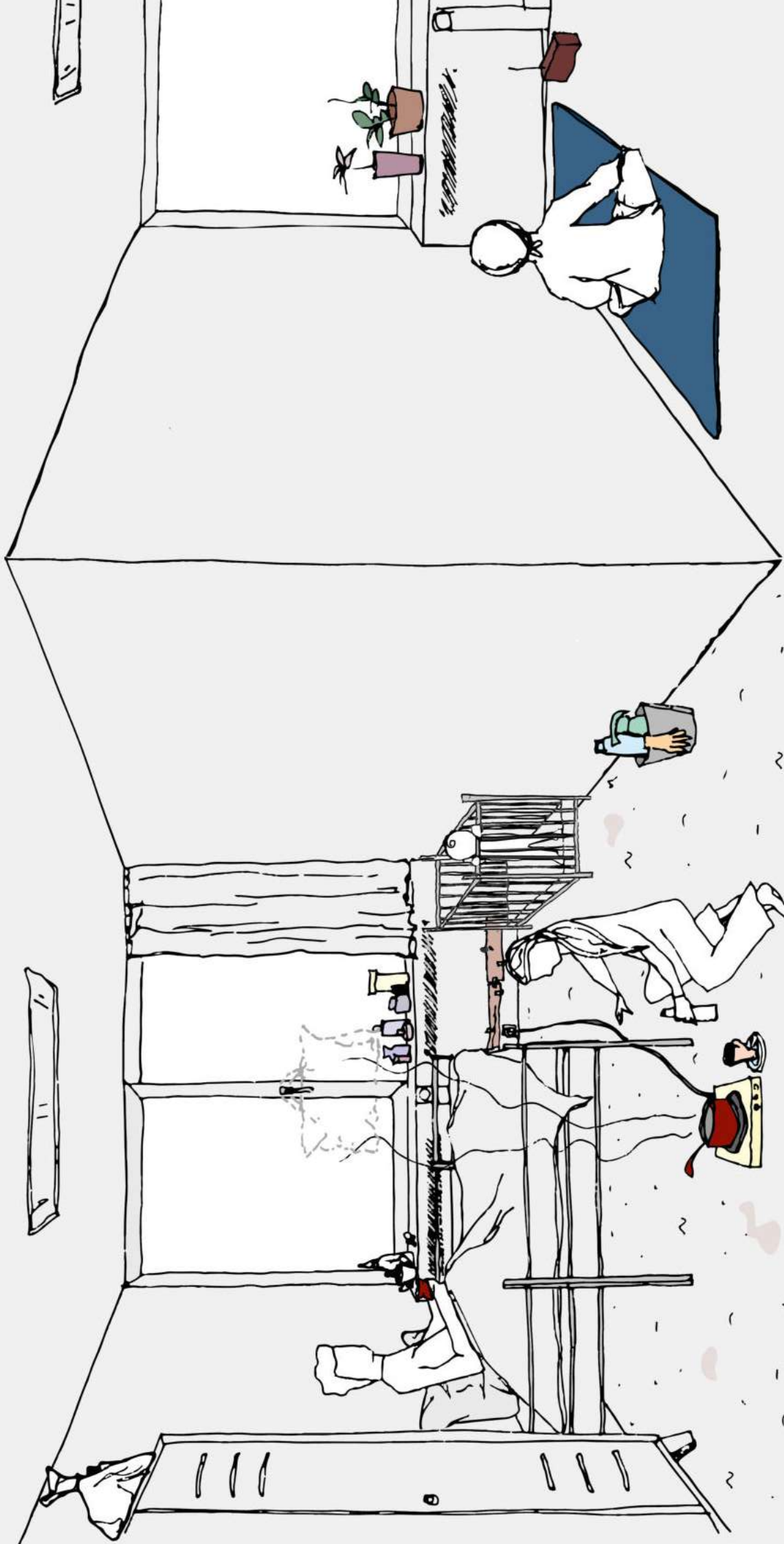
Does your room look like this one?  
"Yes, but this one is clean" (Haroun, 2022).

"There is no privacy at all. Some use their bedcovers to create a wall" (Haroun, 2022).





128 The making of this drawing was possible thanks to the testimonies of Hadiya and Darlita. They sleep in the wing of the building reserved for single women and families. Each family has a private room.



"Muren als papier, mijn kind kan niet slapen" (Darlita, 2022).

"Vous avez sûrement vu nos frigos locaux!" (Hadiya, 2022).

"Jammer want we eten dus op bed, alles snel vuil, ik kuis heel veel, ik zou graag een tafel hebben" (Darlita, 2022).

"Ik decoreer kamer niet, ik heb wel een parfum hoekje" (Darlita, 2022).

"Er zijn muizen, dus hebben spleet onder radiator met karton en tape dicht gedaan." (Darlita, 2022).

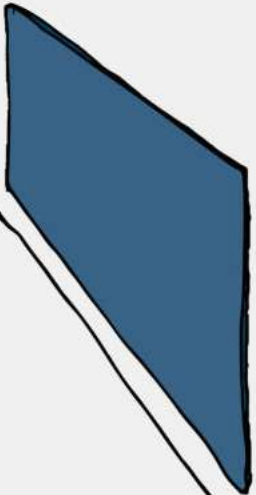
"We leven, koken en eten in de slaapkamer dus ben hele tijd aan het kuisen" (Darlita, 2022).

"Vloer is tapijt dus vlekken blijven erin. Andere kamers hebben harde vloer." (Darlita, 2022).

"Het eten in het centrum niet goed en zonder smaak, 80% kook ik zelf op kamer op elektrisch vuur, ook al is niet toegelaten" (Darlita, 2022).

"Je garde des plantes dans ma chambre" (Hadiya, 2022).

"J'ai créé un petit coin dans ma chambre pour prier et pour pratiquer le yoga" (Hadiya, 2022).



## Endnote Zaventem

### Literature

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### Personal communication

Abdullah E. (2021, November 3). Personal communication [Personal interview].

Abel. (2022, February 25). Personal communication [Personal interview].

Darlita. (2022, February 25). Personal communication [Personal interview].

Hadiya. (2022, February 25). Personal communication [Personal interview].

Haroun. (2022, February 25). Personal communication [Personal interview].

### Figures

Fig. 1.: Own picture. (2021, November 3). The reception centre of Zaventem [Photograph].

Fig. 2.: Wikipedia. (2008, May 21). “Macro” image: dominant road infrastructure in Zaventem [Photograph]. Wikipedia. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=autobunnskraiz&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image>

Fig. 3.: Own picture. (2021, November 3). “Meso” image: frequently used food shop in Zaventem [Photograph].

Fig. 4.: Own picture. (2021, November 3). “Micro” image: corridor to the bedrooms [Photograph].

Fig. 5. Google. (n.d.). [Google Maps screenshot: There is no pavement when crossing the route E40]. <https://www.google.com/maps/@50.8808418,4.4583624,3a,75y,102.71h,91.96t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sao6OuL4MRyZDwfU8sdV9iw!2e0!7i16384!8i8192>

Fig. 6.: Own picture. (2021, November 3). The garden at the street side [Photograph].

Fig. 7.: Own picture. (2021, November 3). Animation room on the ground floor [Photograph].

Fig. 8.: Own picture. (2021, November 3). Corridor towards the refectory [Photograph].

Fig. 9.: Own picture. (2021, November 3). Refectory for the residents [Photograph].

Fig. 10.: Own picture. (2021, November 3). Containers with sanitary facilities. Note the bags hanging out the windows [Photograph].

Fig. 11.: Own picture. (2021, November 3). Corridor in the men’s wing [Photograph].

Fig. 12.: Fedasil Zaventem. (2021, October 20). Abel painting the corridors [Photograph]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/FedasilZaventem>





**CASE 4: JETTE**

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RECEPTION CENTRE

The reception centre in Jette is dedicated to the accommodation of female asylum seekers, including 12 places for female unaccompanied minors. This makes the centre also suitable for women who, due to past experiences, feel more comfortable in the absence of men. The women's children are also welcome in the centre. The Red Cross is Fedasil's largest reception partner and operates similarly in its reception.



**Type:** women's reception centre

**Foundation:** 2010

**Architect:** unknown

**Owner:** private

**Scale:** 340m<sup>2</sup> x 5 floors

**Surroundings:** residential zone

**Previous function:** nursing home

**Staff:**



**Volunteers:**



**Inhabitants:**

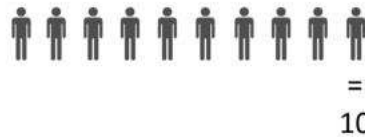


Fig. 1 The women's reception centre in Jette.



Fig. 2 "Macro" image: train station of Jette (Wikipedia, 2021).



Fig. 3 "Meso" image: the frequently visited Koning Boudewijnpark (Google Maps, n.d.).



Fig. 4 "Micro" image: TV room in the reception centre.

## MACRO

The residents of the reception centre in Jette benefit from a wide range of social infrastructures (p. 136). The offer is up to twice as large as in Oudergem, Zaventem or Ukkel. Even the (sub)categories that were hardly present in the vicinity of the other reception centres are well represented here, with the exception of the subcategory “cinema and theatre” [122]. As for the libraries [1-7], there is even one specifically for Armenian literature [6] and one for youth [5]. This is beneficial as there are minors staying at the reception centre as well.

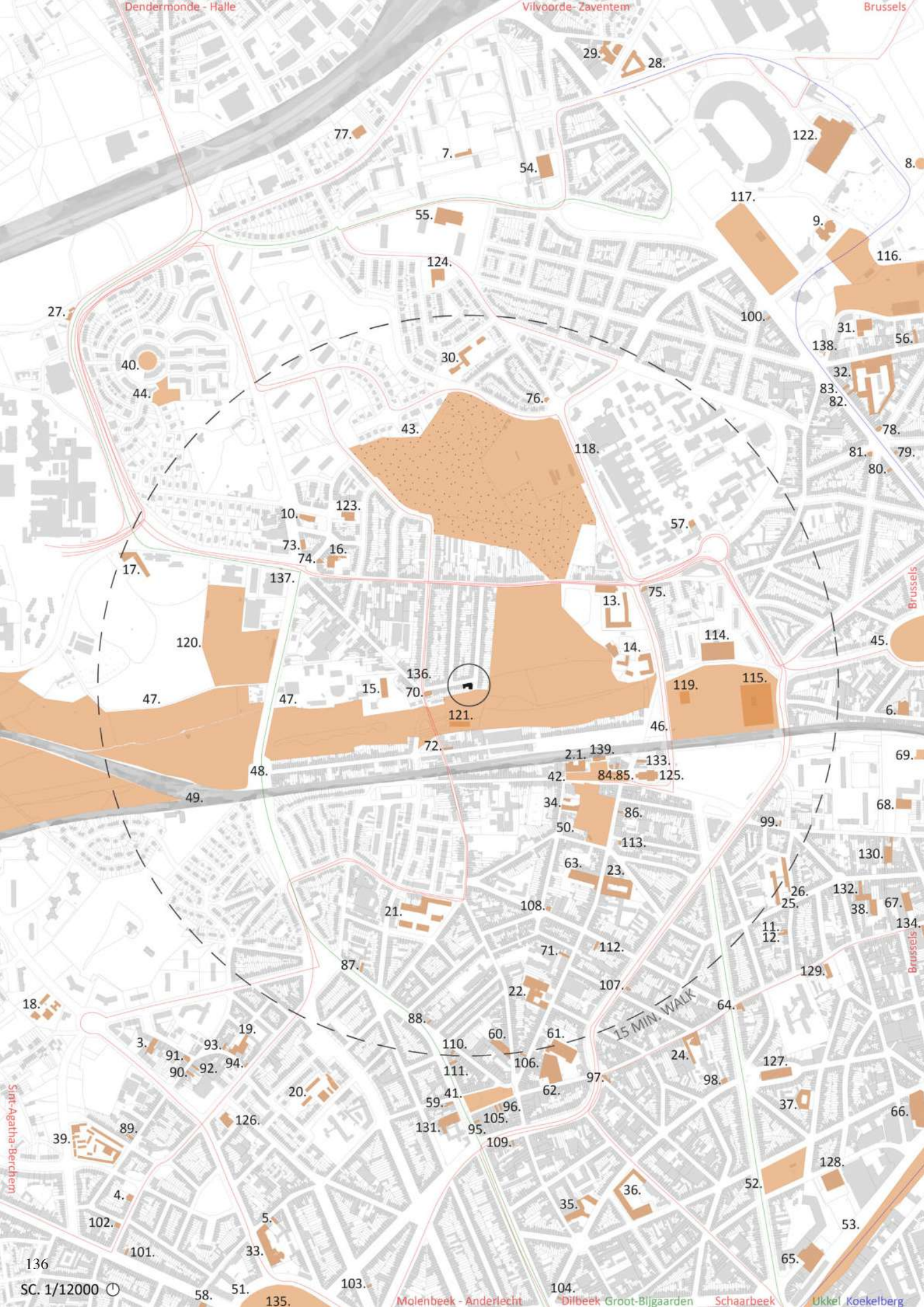
At first sight, the availability of schools [13-39] seems to be very extensive, which makes this neighbourhood look appropriate for accommodating minors. However, the staff of the reception centre explained that an agreement has been made with the municipality. This pact states that if the centre were to be placed in Jette, the minors would not attend school in Jette “because they are quite elitist” (social assistant Red Cross, personal communication, May 1, 2022). Such requirements exemplify how the accessibility of social infrastructures is hindered for certain social groups.

In terms of parks and forests [43-53], the offer in the 15-Minute City is certainly sufficient. The reception centre is located along a green axis, comprised of the marshes of Jette [48] and Ganshoren [49], the Koning Boudewijnpark [47] and the Jongerenpark [46]. Less than 50 metres from the centre’s front door one can find an entrance to this group of parks. Moreover, there are many sports facilities in and around the parks. The social infrastructures in the other (sub)categories generally seem to be located south of the railway lines. In addition to the parks, some large-scale sites in the care sector are located in the north. Here, UZ Brussel, the university children’s hospital and UVC Brugmann can be found, to which the residents of the reception centre are sent when necessary (social assistant, personal communication, May 1, 2022).

Furthermore, it can be noticed that there is a certain diversity within the subcategories as well. The Armenian library [6] and youth library [5] illustrate variety regarding libraries. Other examples are the African food shop [71], Oriental and Asian restaurants, the Oriental hairdresser [110], the Syrian church [132] and the different mosques [133-134].

Finally, it is worth noting that the macro map of Jette includes multiple types of public transport (train, bus, tram and metro). The train station of Jette [139] is located south of the reception centre, on the Kardinaal Mercierplein [42], in an area densely concentrated with multiple social infrastructures. The bus stop [136] and tram stop [137] are also within walking distance, which is a big convenience regarding mobility. And although the metro network is also visible on the macro map, the closest metro stop [138] is approximately a 20-minute walk from the reception centre. However, they can also reach a metro stop by using the tram line.





Dendermonde - Halle

Vilvoorde - Zaventem

Brussels

Sint-Agatha-Berchem

Brussels

Brussels

SC. 1/12000

Molenbeek - Anderlecht

Dilbeek Groot-Bilgaarden

Schaarbeek

Ukkel Koekelberg

15 MIN. WALK

## PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

### Libraries

1. Biblio Jette
2. Openbare Bibliotheek Jette
3. Openbare Bibliotheek Ganshoren
4. Bibliotheque Communale Gansh.
5. Bibliotheque pour la Jeunesse
6. Bibliothèque arménienne
7. Bibliotheek Brunfaut

### Museums

8. Atomium
9. Planetarium
10. Oude Abtswoning van Dieleghem
11. Musée René Margritte Museum
12. Musée d'Art Abstrait

### Schools

13. Heilig Hart Jette
14. Heilig-Hartschoolkomitee
15. GO! Basisschool de Kleine Geuzen
16. Kleuterschool Dieleghem
17. Gemeentelijke Basissch. - Poelbos
18. GO! Basisschool 't Overbeek
19. Sint-Goedele Brussel
20. Establishment school de la d.
21. GO! Basisschool de Goudenregen
22. GO! Technisch Atheneum Jette
23. Sint-Pieterscollege Basisschool
24. Sint-Michielschool Jette
25. Scholengemeenschap spectrum
26. Adm. Com. de Jette Taleninstituut
27. Jette Basisschool
28. Ecole des Magnolias
29. Regina Pacisinstituut bso-tso
30. Ecole Aurore
31. Gemeentelijke basisschool E. B.
32. Atheneum Emile Bockstael
33. Centre Enseignement Notre Dame
34. Franstalige school Du Champ des T.
35. School Vanhelfmont
36. Franstalig Atheneum van Jette
37. School Blanchard Jette
38. Sint-Pieterscollege Basis
39. Franstalig Atheneum Ganshoren

### Squares

40. Burgemeester Jean-Louis T. plein
41. Koningin Astridplein
42. Kardinaal Mercierplein

### Parks and forests

43. Dielegembos
44. Ylo Parc
45. Prins Leopoldsquare
46. Jongerenpark
47. Koning Boudewijnpark

48. Moeras van Jette
49. Moeras van Ganshoren
50. Garcetpark
51. Het Elisabethpark
52. Huybrechtspark
53. Park van Lijn 28

## COMMERCE

### Food shops

54. Carrefour market
55. Delhaize
56. Johan
57. Louis Delhaize B.
58. Carrefour market
59. Louis Delhaize Jette
60. Proxy Spiegel
61. Colruyt Jette
62. Carrefour market
63. Delhaize Theodor
64. Carrefour express
65. Delhaize C. Woeste
66. Colruyt Laken
67. Proxy Delhaize
68. Lidl
69. ALDI
70. Alg. voeding Bhogal
71. Alimentation Africaine

### Restaurants [< € 7,9]

72. Le Bistro
73. New Hong Kong
74. Au Bon Coin
75. La Piazza
76. The place to be Jette
77. Quick Wommel
78. Le Houba Taverne
79. Snack Mimoza
80. Pronto Pizza
81. Café Le Belvedere
82. Grill Land
83. Pitta Loca
84. Op Den Hoek
85. Best Grill Jette
86. East Food Restaurant
87. King Grill - Lebanese
88. La Saigonaise
89. Gansho Food
90. Maison Khinkali
91. I Love Pizza
92. Pala's Food
93. Kebap Food
94. Snack Baron
95. Domino's Pizza
96. O'Tacos Jette
97. Pizza Hut
98. Le Pote Âgé taverne
99. C'BON

### Hair salons and barbers

100. Coiffure Hair'Ic
101. Kapster Ilona
102. J&C Coiffure
103. Haircoholix
104. Kapper Europeaan
105. Olivier Dachkin
106. New Difference
107. Black and White
108. Microvero Style
109. N. Céleste Coiffure
110. Oosterse kapper
111. Castef / Stefaan
112. Dallas Coiffure
113. Jimmy Logan

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Sports facilities

114. Omnisport Jette
115. Tennis Jette
116. Primerose Sportclub
117. Victor Boin complex
118. Ritterklub v.s.v. Jette
119. Basketball court
120. R.s.d. Jette
121. Omnisports

### Cinema and theatre

122. Kinepolis Brussel

## RELIGION

123. Oude Sint-Jozefkerk
124. Sint-Clarakerk
125. Sint-Pieterkerk
126. Rooms Kath. kerk
127. OLV van Lourdes
128. Int. Kerk van Brussel
129. Per Mariam ad Jes.
130. Protestantse Kerk
131. Sint-Jan Brussel
132. Eglise Syriaque
133. Mosque d'Averroès
134. Mosque El Chatibi
135. Basiliiek Koekelberg

## TRANSIT

- A. Bus direction
136. Bus stop F. Volral
- B. Tram direction
137. Tram stop Oude A.
- C. Metro direction
138. Metro station H.-B.
- D. Train
139. Train station Jette

### The interviewees

The interviews in the reception centre in Jette were conducted on the first of May 2022. Three women volunteered to engage in a discussion. The interviews were held on the third floor, in one of the few rooms for collective use in the centre. The first resident who participated was Yousra, a 23-year-old woman from Morocco. Yousra is in Belgium since almost three years, most of this time in the reception centre in Jette. The second interviewee was Denise. She is 35 years old and is originally from Cameroon. However, for the last ten years, she had been living in Ukraine. Like many others, she had to flee the country due to the Russo-Ukrainian war. Consequently, Denise resides in this centre since March 2022. The last conversation was held with Camilla. This middle-aged Mexican woman lives in Belgium since January 2021. The testimonies of these women are the basis of the meso and micro analysis for the Jette reception centre. Additional information was gathered afterwards, during a discussion with the social workers of the centre.

Yousra left Morocco three years ago with a tourist visa, as a minor, and settled down for two months in France with her aunt. “Là, les problèmes ont commencé” (Yousra, personal communication, May 1, 2022). Due to personal reasons, she had to leave and took a “BlaBlaBus” towards Belgium. Once arrived, Yousra stayed with her former boyfriend. This did not work out well, and she applied for asylum at Klein Kasteeltje. She stayed for a fortnight, until she was transferred to a reception centre in Doornik. There she didn’t stay for more than a week, due to the isolated location of this centre Yousra used her right to ask one single transfer to a different reception centre, and so ended up in Jette. Once moved in, Yousra started learning the profession of care assistant, and she is currently taking classes and doing an internship for this purpose. Denise, in contrast, had arrived only recently in Brussels, two months ago. Although the Fedasil staff was overwhelmed by the number of applicants at Klein Kasteeltje, Denise was admitted after showing her Ukrainian documents. During one week, she stayed there in a women’s dormitory. Subsequently, Denise was welcomed in the women’s reception centre in Jette, in a room on the first floor. At the time of interview, she was still discovering the surroundings. She regularly pays visits to downtown Brussels with friends that she met at Klein Kasteeltje. The third interviewee Camilla used to live in Mexico City. In 1989 she had married a Belgian man, they settled together in Antwerp and have a daughter who is currently still living in Antwerp. Because of domestic violence, Camilla returned to her home country. She then moved to New York City to find work, and indeed worked there for a while as a nanny. The host family, however, treated her badly,

which made her to go back to Europe. Instead of returning directly to Belgium, Camilla arrived in the Netherlands and applied there for asylum, being unaware of the Dublin Regulation. As a result, she was not initially accepted at Klein Kasteeltje when she came to Belgium. After some time, her lawyer informed her that the regulation no longer applied to her, so she could apply again for asylum at the Fedasil arrival centre. This time she was accepted and because of her past, Camilla was considered to have a vulnerable profile. She was therefore housed in the women’s centre of Jette immediately after registration.

### The map

Jette is a municipality in the north-west of Brussels. As discussed in the macro analysis, the 15-Minute City of the reception centre contains many municipal parks, commercial facilities and other social infrastructures. The women living in this reception centre appear to use some of these places, but only a few of the places seem really popular among the residents. Foremost of these is the Koning Boudewijnpark [1], as represented in the meso map of the Jette reception centre (pp. 140-141). The entrance to this park is barely 50 metres from the reception centre, and the park is therefore visited regularly by all interviewees. The Koning Boudewijnpark consists of two parts, separated by the E. Toussaintstraat. Part 1, the biggest section of the park, is about 14,3 hectares in size, or more than 3 times the surface area of the Park of Zaventem. The second part of the park, located to the east of the E. Toussaintstraat, is around 3,5 hectares. The Molenbeek brook runs through this section. Between the lawns, several walking paths and mountain bike trails meander. Alongside are several ponds, a playground and a sports field. In the north, the park merges into the Dielegembos. Yousra goes there to jog when she finds the time, while Denise as well as Camilla make promenades in these green surroundings. “Je me promène beaucoup parce que je suis relaxée” (Camilla, personal communication, May 1, 2022).

Following the E. Toussaintstraat to the south, after passing in the tunnel under the railways and turning to the east into the Kerkstraat, one finds the Kardinaal Mercierplein [3]. This large municipal square, which is divided into two parts by a street running the entire length, is surrounded by bars and restaurants, the library and the Sint-Pieterkerk. To the north the train station of Jette is situated, and to the south the square opens out onto the Garcetpark. Camilla mentioned that she frequently visits this place. “À la place de la gare il y a beaucoup d’activités et beaucoup de transport” (Camilla, personal communication, May 1, 2022).

Apart from jogging, Yousra also likes to go to the gym in her spare time. More precisely, she goes to the Basic-Fit [2] in Jette or, exceptionally, in the centre of Brussels. The “Basic-Fit Brussels Jette Henri Werrie” is situated at 500 metres south from the aforementioned Kardinaal Mercierplein [3], in a residential area of the municipality. The last meso-place represents the small local shop, called “Algemene Voeding Boghal” [4] on the corner of their street. It is a small grocery store, selling basic food products and cigarettes, and serves as a package pick-up point for B-Post. Camilla often makes a short stop here. “Ce sont des Indiens, des gens aimables” (Camilla, personal communication, May 1, 2022).

As described in the macro analysis of the reception centre, Jette has an extensive public transportation network to get around in the city. The three interviewees make use of it on a daily basis. Different bus stops are located in the proximity of the reception centre, and Tram 9 runs to Simonis, from where the metro departs. The historic city centre of Brussels, also known as the Pentagon, is well-known among the residents. Yousra meets with “les copines” in the Nieuwstraat to go shopping, or at the Naamsepoort to hang out. They often meet at the viewpoint near the Justitiepaleis, from where they descend into the streets of the Marollen.

Denise visited Belgium a few years ago as a tourist. As a result, she already knew the city to some extent. Today the Cameroonian woman moves around in Brussels with other women that she met at Klein Kasteeltje, especially with two friends who were transferred to Jette with her at the same time. They sometimes visit the site of the Atomium, and the “Matongé évidemment!” (Denise, personal communication, May 1, 2022). For her part, Camilla is very fond of walking. Like Denise, she doesn’t have the Orange Card yet, as a result of which she is not allowed to work. Therefore, she spends some of her time enjoying the city centre. “Bruxelles c’est spéciale, j’ai le sentiment de relaxer” (Camilla, personal communication, May 1, 2022).

### The network

The reception centre in Jette cooperates with partners to provide assistance to children and young mothers. An overview of the most important ones is listed on the right. The Red Cross relies also on its other offices in Brussels. Furthermore, it cooperates with schools and crèches to welcome the children. However, the reception centre has a pact with the municipality: if the centre were to be placed in Jette, the children would not go to school in the municipality. “Because these are quite elitist”, explained a social assistant from the reception centre (social assistant Red Cross, personal communication, May 1, 2022).



### Pharmacie Defrance

is a pharmacy near the Jette train station that supplies medicines to the reception centre (social assistant Red Cross, personal communication, May 1, 2022).



### Ploef asbl

is a theatre in Jette that makes its space available for the homework class for the children of the centre (social assistant Red Cross, personal communication, May 1, 2022).



### Nasci VZW

offers support to disadvantaged pregnant women, single mothers and families facing temporary or structural difficulties (Nasci, n.d.). They deliver baby clothes to the centre.



### Convivial

wants to promote the integration of refugees and newcomers in Belgium in a dynamic of listening and mutual commitment (Convivial, n.d.).



### BruZelle

combats menstrual poverty by collecting sanitary pads and delivering them freely and discreetly to menstruating people in precarious situations (Bruzelle, 2022).



### Schaarbeek Red Cross

has a clothing service. Since the reception centre does not have this in-house, they use this facility in Schaarbeek (social assistant Red Cross, personal communication, May 1, 2022).



### Solentra

diagnoses and treats psycho-traumatic issues from migrant children and young adults (and their families) who have fled their home country due to war (Solentra, 2018).



### La Sagesse Philomène

is the primary school where most of the children from the reception centre go to school (social assistant Red Cross, personal communication, May 1, 2022).

Within the 15-Minute City, the Koning Boudewijnpark seems to attract both Yousra, Denise and Camilla. Other meso-places in Jette are a food shop on the corner of their street, the Basic Fit and the Kardinaal Mercierplein in front of the railway station. Again, the residents explore hotspots in the City of Brussels, represented on the left side of the map. The corresponding macro numbers are indicated where relevant, as well as the postal code of the municipality, the scale and the interviewees who used the site.

POELAERTPLEIN & NAAMSE POORT  
1000 - SC. 1/12000

Yousra  
"On va avec des copines à la belle vue à côté du palais de justice!  
Et puis descendre dans les rues des Marolles." (Y, 2022).

5,6 KM

4,4 KM

1,9 KM

ATOMIUM  
1020 - SC. 1/3000  
Denise

GROTE MARKT  
1000 - SC. 1/4000

Yousra, Denise, Camilla  
"Grand Place je connais bien." (D, 2022).  
"J'aime aller au centre de Bruxelles. Plein de gens, plein de touristes,  
plein de langues et de l'ambiance. Tout le monde est différent." (C, 2022).

NIEUWSTRAAT  
1000 - SC. 1/8000  
Yousra  
"Pour le shopping" (Y, 2022).

3,9 KM

MATONGE  
1050 - SC. 1/4000

Denise  
"Et Matongé évidemment!" (D, 2022).

6,1 KM

1. KONING BOUDEWIJNPARK [47]  
1090 - SC. 1/4800  
Yousra, Denise, Camilla  
"Pendant le Ramadan, je vais me promener au Parc Baudouin." (Y, 2022).  
"Je me promène beaucoup parce que je suis relaxée." (C, 2022).

4. ALGEMENE VOEDING BOGHAL [70]  
1090 - SC. 1/800  
Camilla  
"Ce sont des indiens, des gens aimables." (C, 2022).

RECEPTION CENTRE  
1090 - SC. 1/1200

300M

4.

1.

SCHAARBEEK RED CROSS

3.

NASCLVZW

2.

15 MIN. WALK

3. KARDINAAL MERCIERPLEIN [42]  
1090 - SC. 1/3000  
Camilla  
"Place de la gare, beaucoup d'activités  
et beaucoup de transport." (C, 2022).

2. BASIC FIT JETTE  
1090 - SC. 1/1000  
Yousra  
"Je vais au Basic Fit chaque semaine." (Y, 2022).

CONVIVAL

BRUZELLE

LA SAGESSE PHILOMENE  
SOLENTRA

SC. 1/12000

GROTE MARKT  
1000



NIEUWSTRAAT  
1000



ATOMIUM  
1020



POELAERTPLEIN & NAAMSEPOORT  
1000



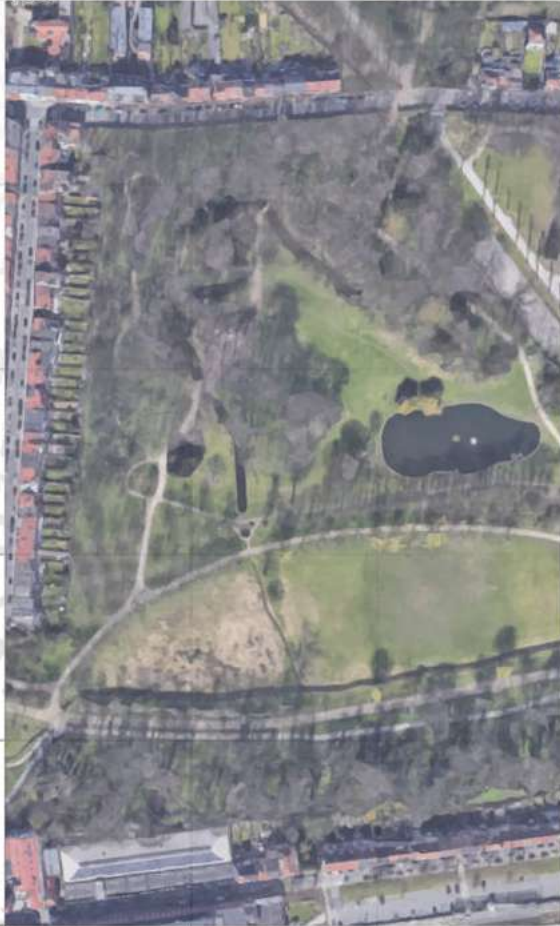
MATONGE  
1050



KARDINAAL MERCIERPLEIN  
1090



KONING BOUDEWIJNPARK  
1090



ALGEMENE VOEDING BOGHAL  
1090



BASIC FIT JETTE  
1090



In the pictures of the Jette meso-places, the amount of urban streets and squares is most striking. The extensive network of public transport in Jette, presented in the macro map, facilitates their mobility towards the city centre. The only green space in the map depicts the Koning Boudewijn Park in Jette, which is located only 50 metres from the women's reception centre.



## MICRO

The reception centre in Jette opened its doors in 2010 to accommodate women and non-accompanied minor girls. The Red Cross centre is located in a former nursing home in a residential area, and is rented from a private owner. Today, the centre has welcomed about 100 residents, including 5 minors. The floor plans of the Jette reception centre were created using the archives of the municipality, and were completed with information from the staff of the Red Cross.

### The reception centre

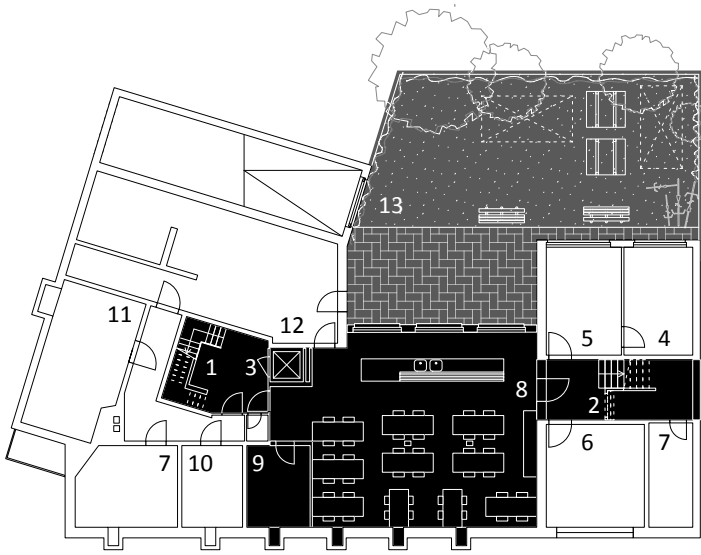
The centre is housed in a corner building that does not stand out from the rest of the residential street. Had the entrance of number 37 not displayed the well known Red Cross icon, the facade in natural stone and bricks would reveal nothing of the building's current function. From the entrance, a small staircase leads to the reception desk. Here the residents can make their inquiries or request tickets for public transportation: "Je marche, ou je vais à la réception pour des tickets de transport pour visiter mes proches" (Camilla, personal communication, May 1, 2022). The west side of the ground floor is locked and is reserved for the Red Cross staff. It includes the manager's office, offices for the assistants, storage room and a meeting room. The latter is sometimes used as a classroom for some of the inhabitants. "Cette classe est réservée aux mineures qui ne vont pas encore à l'école à cause de la barrière linguistique" (F. Khali, personal communication, November 2, 2021). The remaining rooms on the ground floor are toilets, an office for medical assistance and a children's area.

Beyond the reception desk, the elevator and the first staircase are located. Upon descending one finds the largest collective space held by the reception centre; this section is partly below street level. This is the refectory where residents can have breakfast from 6:45 am until 8:45 am, lunch from 11:45 am until 12:45 am, and also dinner in the early evening. Furthermore, it is possible here to fetch water, coffee or tea during the whole day. The space is adjacent to the kitchen where the meals of the catering company are prepared. Every Sunday the residents have the possibility to cook here. "Mais seulement deux personnes par dimanche, et il faut s'inscrire" (Denise, personal communication, May 1, 2022). F. Khali, director of the centre, talked about a plan for renovating the kitchen and add ten induction fires, because cooking seems to be important for the resident women. However, six months later, at the time of the interviews with the residents, these plans had not yet been implemented; it remains uncertain whether this idea will soon materialize.

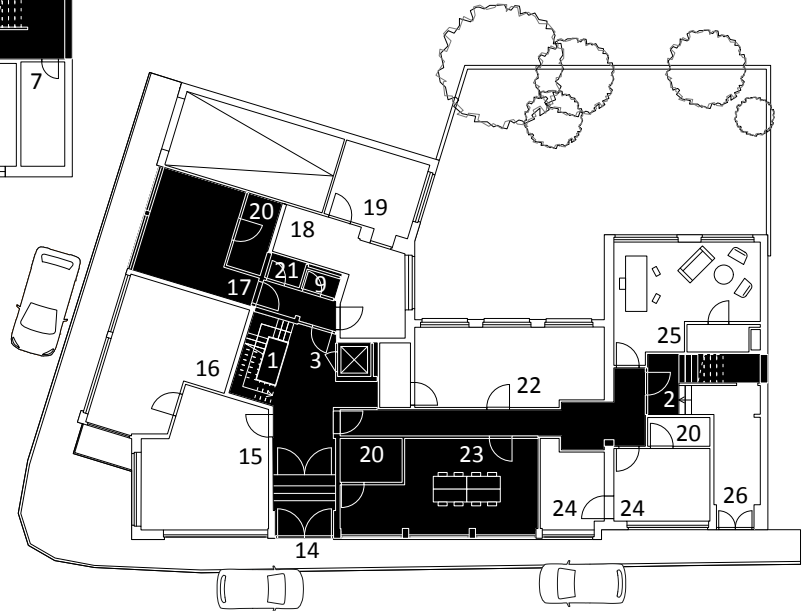
The terrace and the garden, located in the south, can be reached via the refectory. The garden that covers a surface of approximately 80m<sup>2</sup>, contains two picnic tables, two benches and a playground for children. A couple of bicycles can be found in the corner of the garden. Although this outdoor space is rather small for the number of inhabitants, it represents an important space in the centre. "Je suis toujours dans le jardin quand je ne suis pas sortie ou quand je ne dors pas, car il y fait calme. Le centre n'est pas très calme en général" (Denise, personal communication, May 1, 2022).

The staircase behind the reception desk also leads to the upper floors, which are mainly filled with the 22 bedrooms. Each sleeping floor is colour-coded by the Red Cross to facilitate orientation within the building. Level +1 is the blue one. These rooms host single adult women. Similar to the OOC in Oudergem, each room in this former retirement home is equipped with sanitary facilities. "Il y en a qui y laissent le bordel" (Yousra, personal communication, May 1, 2022), but for Yousra, this remains an important advantage of this reception centre. Furthermore, rooms in the east corner of each floor are equipped with their own terrace.

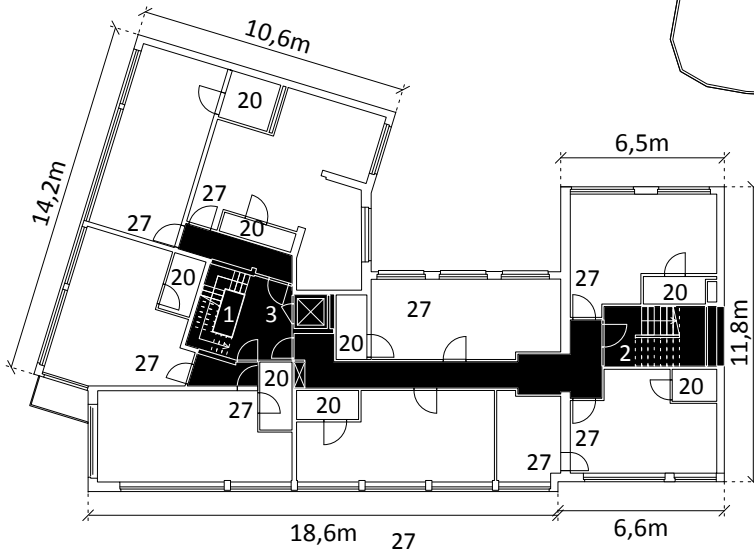
The next floor upward, colour-coded orange, is similar to the first one. Apart from adult women, there are also a few rooms for female unaccompanied minors. The centre arranged a minor's chill and TV room in the north-west corner, adjacent to staircase B. It is furnished with two sofas, a table, a piano and a television screen. The minors had participated in decorating the room. The third floor is organised slightly different. Especially women with children live on this yellow floor. The western corners of the building have two terraces, one of which has been out of order since November – and still was so at the time of visit in May. Apparently a defect in the terrace floor rendered the unit unsafe for use. The interviews took place in the TV room adjacent to the terrace, in one of the few collective spaces in the reception centre. "There is a lack of space for conviviality" (social assistant, personal communication, May 1, 2022). The room is arranged similarly to the minor's salon and is open from 4 pm until 10 pm.



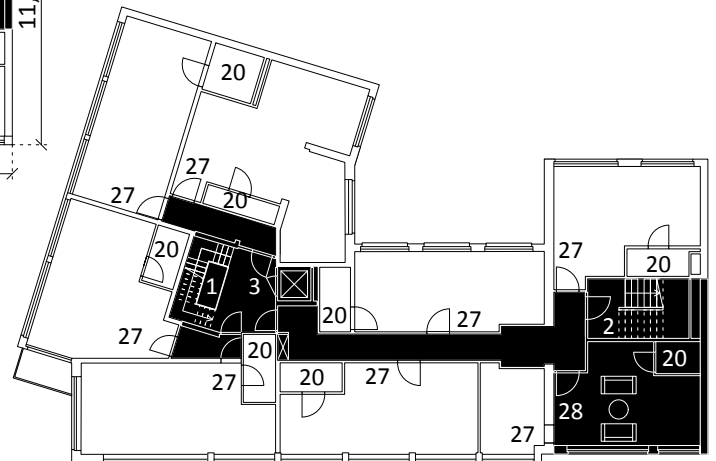
-1



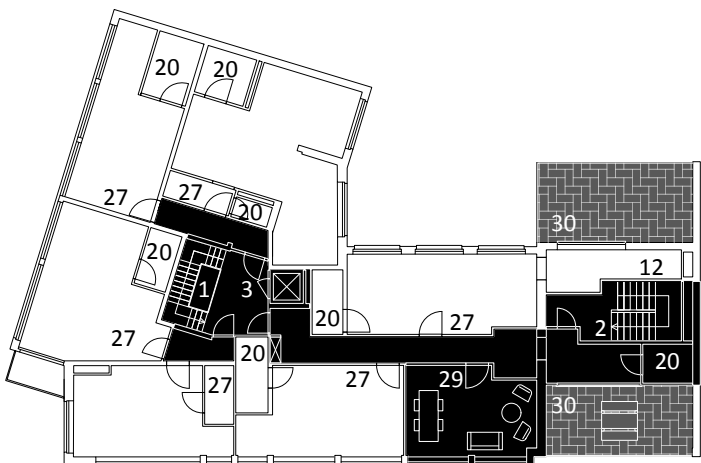
+0



+1



+2



+3

- 1. Staircase A
- 2. Staircase B
- 3. Elevator
- 4. Pantry
- 5. Vestibule
- 6. Laundry room
- 7. Cellar
- 8. Refectory
- 9. Toilets
- 10. Technical room
- 11. Boiler room
- 12. Kitchen
- 13. Courtyard
- 14. Entrance building
- 15. Reception
- 16. IT room
- 17. Children's area
- 18. Medical assistance
- 19. Office
- 20. Bathroom
- 21. Toilet for disabled people
- 22. Assistance
- 23. Meeting and classroom
- 24. Storage
- 25. Manager's office
- 26. Service entrance
- 27. Room with sanitary
- 28. Minor's salon
- 29. TV room
- 30. Terrace



Fig. 5 The refectory in Jette.



Fig. 6 Kitchen next to the refectory.



Fig. 7 Salon for the minors.

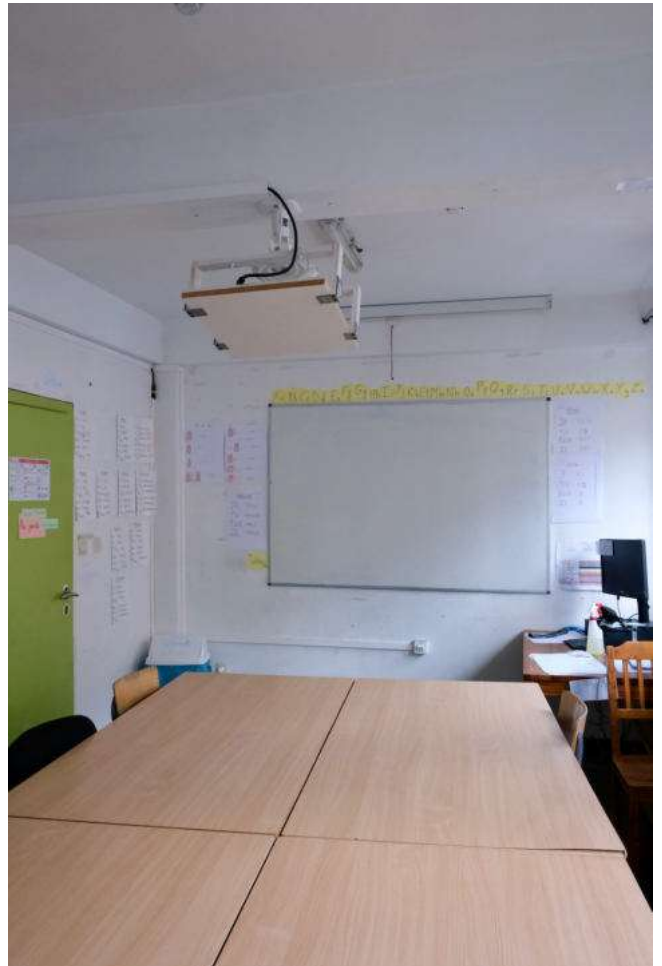


Fig. 8 Meeting and class room in Jette.



Fig. 9 TV room where the interviews took place.

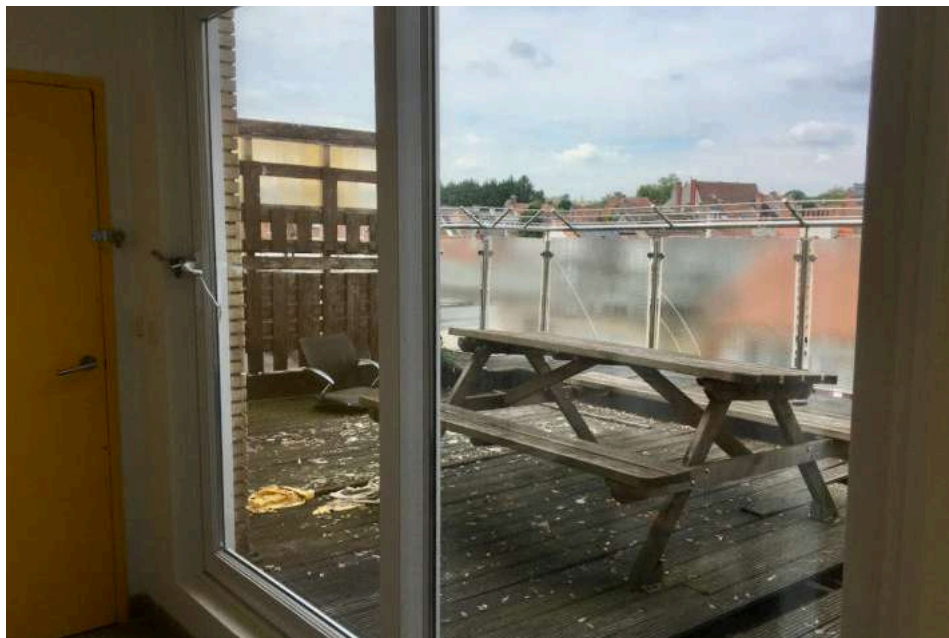


Fig. 10 Terrace has been closed for months due to damaged boarding.



Fig. 11 Garden next to the refectory.



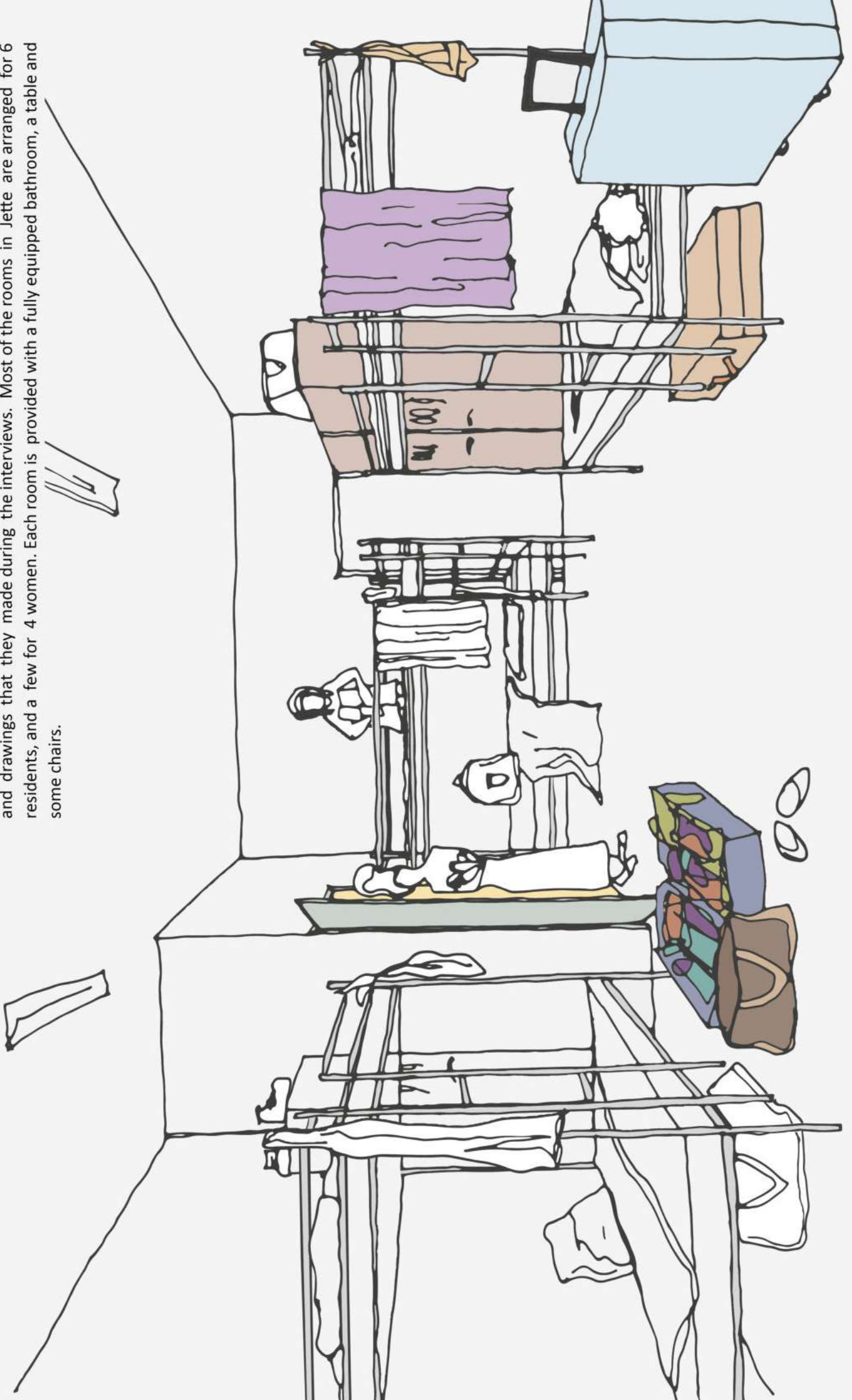
### The rooms

In the Jette reception centre, each of the rooms may house 4 to 6 residents, and are situated on the first, second and third floor. The three interviewees all stay in a six-person room. The next drawing (pp. 150-151) represents an impression of such a room in Jette, along with testimonies from the interviews. Yousra, Denise and Camilla all gave detailed explanations of their respective bedrooms, and expressed their mixed feelings about the rooms. During the first interview, Yousra drew the plan of her room which is located at the streetside. The bathroom is situated on the right when entering the bedroom. One bunk bed is installed in between the bathroom and the door, while the other beds are tucked against the right and left wall. Although bunk beds are part of the standard furnishings in the Fedasil and Red Cross reception centres, they are not in fact an object that adults are used to. However, Denise is the first and only interviewee to mention this: “Des lits en étage, ça fait longtemps qu’on n’a plus vécu ça, moi en tout cas” (Denise, personal communication, May 1, 2022).

The three women shared similar feelings about cohabitation within a room of approximately 30m<sup>2</sup>. “C’est difficile de rester au centre, dans une chambre de six personnes. Il n’y a pas de vie privée, mais après beaucoup de temps on s’habitue” (Yousra, personal communication, May 1, 2022). As mentioned before, the reception centre contains very few collective spaces where the women can escape from the overcrowded bedrooms. As a result, many residents spend a lot of time in their rooms, especially if they did not yet receive the Orange Card. “Ma voisine du lit d’au-dessus reste 24 heures sur 24 dans son lit, et je lui dis de bouger!” (Yousra, personal communication, May 1, 2022). In her drawing, Yousra also sketched six lockers, a table and a chair for each resident. The lack of storage space seems a recurrent problem in the various reception centres. Each resident is entitled to one locker of approximately 1.8 m high, 0.5 m deep and 0.4 m tall. “Moi j’ai acheté des valises pour stocker mes vêtements d’été ou hiver” (Yousra, personal communication, May 1, 2022). So, in addition to the many suitcases commonly brought by ‘new arrivals’ to Brussels, Yousra had bought a few extra to serve as a wardrobe. Other residents hang clothes on the railings of the bunk beds, which act as alternative clothes racks. Creativity remains a generic solution to deal with cramped space.

Camilla was assigned a room with five other women. “Je suis très ouverte d’apprendre d’autres cultures, mais elles ne sont pas toutes comme ça, elles ont des préjugés” (Camilla, personal communication, May 1, 2022). The 50-year-old woman explained the difficulties of living together with three girls of about 18 years old, a 26-year-old mother and a woman of 40. “À 6 dans la chambre, très difficile pour la culture. Pas seulement la langue, mais aussi la mentalité et l’âge.” (Camilla, personal communication, May 1, 2022).

This sketch of the bedroom of the Jette reception centre draws on testimonies from Yusra and Denise and drawings that they made during the interviews. Most of the rooms in Jette are arranged for 6 residents, and a few for 4 women. Each room is provided with a fully equipped bathroom, a table and some chairs.



“Côté hygiène très bien” (Denise, 2022).

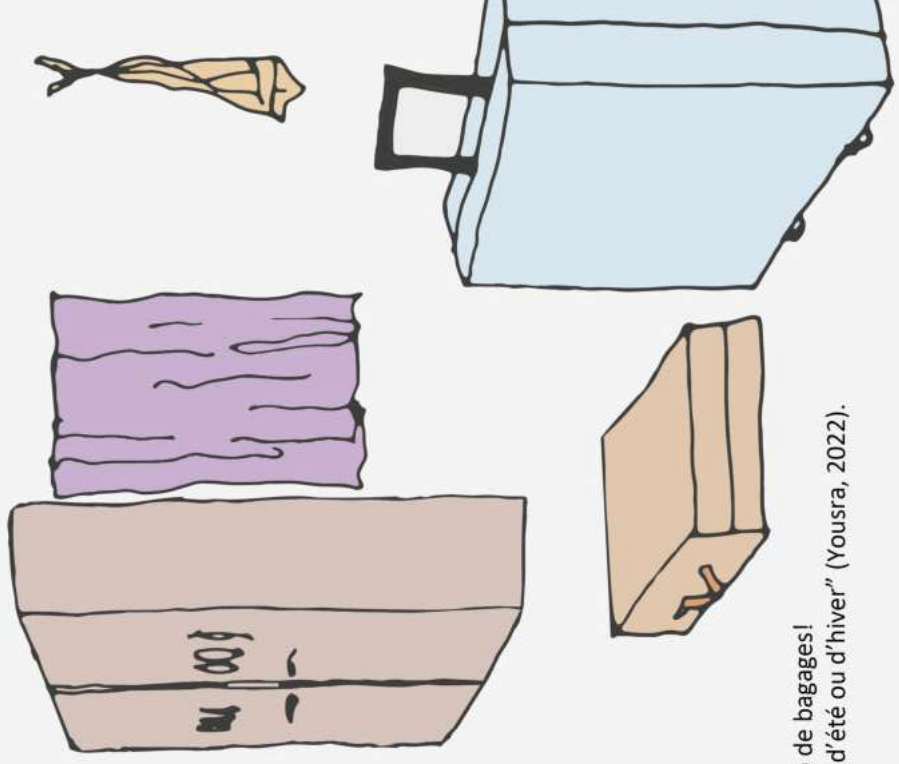
“Une chambre très étroite, des lits en étages.  
Ça fait longtemps qu'on n'a plus vécu ça, moi en tout cas” (Denise, 2022).

“y” en a qui laissent le bordel dans la salle de bain” (Yousra, 2022).



“Moi je suis venue avec un vêtement,  
mais quand il y en a qui arriveront,  
je commencerai à avoir des problèmes.  
Car la chambre et le casier sont très étroits,  
il n'y a vraiment pas d'espace” (Denise, 2022).

“Les casiers sont beaucoup trop étroits.  
Tout le monde pend ses vêtements aux trucs des lits” (Denise, 2022).



“Pas de décoration, mais beaucoup de bagages!  
Moi j'ai acheté des valises pour stocker mes vêtements d'été ou d'hiver” (Yousra, 2022).



## Endnote Jette

### Literature

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Khali F. (2021, November 2). Personal communication [Personal interview].

Social assistant Jette. (2022, May 1). Personal communication [Personal interview].

Social assistant Jette. (2022, May 1). Personal communication [Personal interview].

Yousra. (2022, May 1). Personal communication [Personal interview].

### Figures

Fig. 1.: Own picture. (2021, November 2). The women's reception centre in Jette [Photograph].

Fig. 2.: Wikipedia. (2021, May 3). "Macro" image: train station of Jette [Photograph]. Wikipedia. [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Station\\_Jette](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Station_Jette)

Fig. 3.: Google. (n.d.). [Google Maps screenshot: "Meso" image: the frequently visited Koning Boudewijnpark]. <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Koning+Boudewijnpark,+1090+Jette/@50.8829089,4.3241536,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x47c3c3d1d4e509f3:0x5708aaae9b54fbab!8m2!3d50.8834013!4d4.3273593?hl=nl>

Fig. 4.: Own picture. (2021, November 2). "Micro" image: TV room in the reception centre [Photograph].

Fig. 5. Own picture. (2021, November 2). The refectory in Jette [Photograph].

Fig. 6. Own picture. (2021, November 2). Kitchen next to the refectory [Photograph].

Fig. 7. Own picture. (2021, November 2). Salon for the minors [Photograph].

Fig. 8. Own picture. (2021, November 2). Meeting and class room in Jette [Photograph].

Fig. 9. Own picture. (2021, November 2). TV room where the interviews took place [Photograph].

Fig. 10. Own picture. (2021, November 2). Terrace has been closed for months due to damaged boarding [Photograph].

Fig. 11. Own picture. (2021, November 2). Garden next to the refectory [Photograph].





**CASE 5: UKKEL**

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RECEPTION CENTRE

The reception centre in Ukkel is a phase 2 reception centre for male unaccompanied minors after their stay in an OOC. It is housed in two adjacent apartment buildings that had been combined and transformed into a nursing home. The structure of the building results from this function. Without major modifications to the building, in 2011 a reception centre was opened for families and unaccompanied minors. In 2016, the target group was limited to the latter.



**Type:** reception centre unaccompanied boys

**Foundation:** 2011

**Architect:** S. Farkas, Y. Marchant & others

**Owner:** private

**Scale:** 500m<sup>2</sup> x 5 floors

**Surroundings:** residential & commercial zone

**Previous function:** nursing home

**Staff:**



**Volunteers:**



**Inhabitants:**



=  
10



Fig. 1 The reception centre of Ukkel (corner building and building on the left) (Google Maps, n.d.).



Fig. 2 "Macro" image: Monday market at the Sint-Jobsplein in front of the reception centre (Wonen in Brussel, n.d.).



Fig. 3 "Meso" image: the frequently visited Ter Kamerenbos.



Fig. 4 "Micro" image: the refectory in Ukkel.

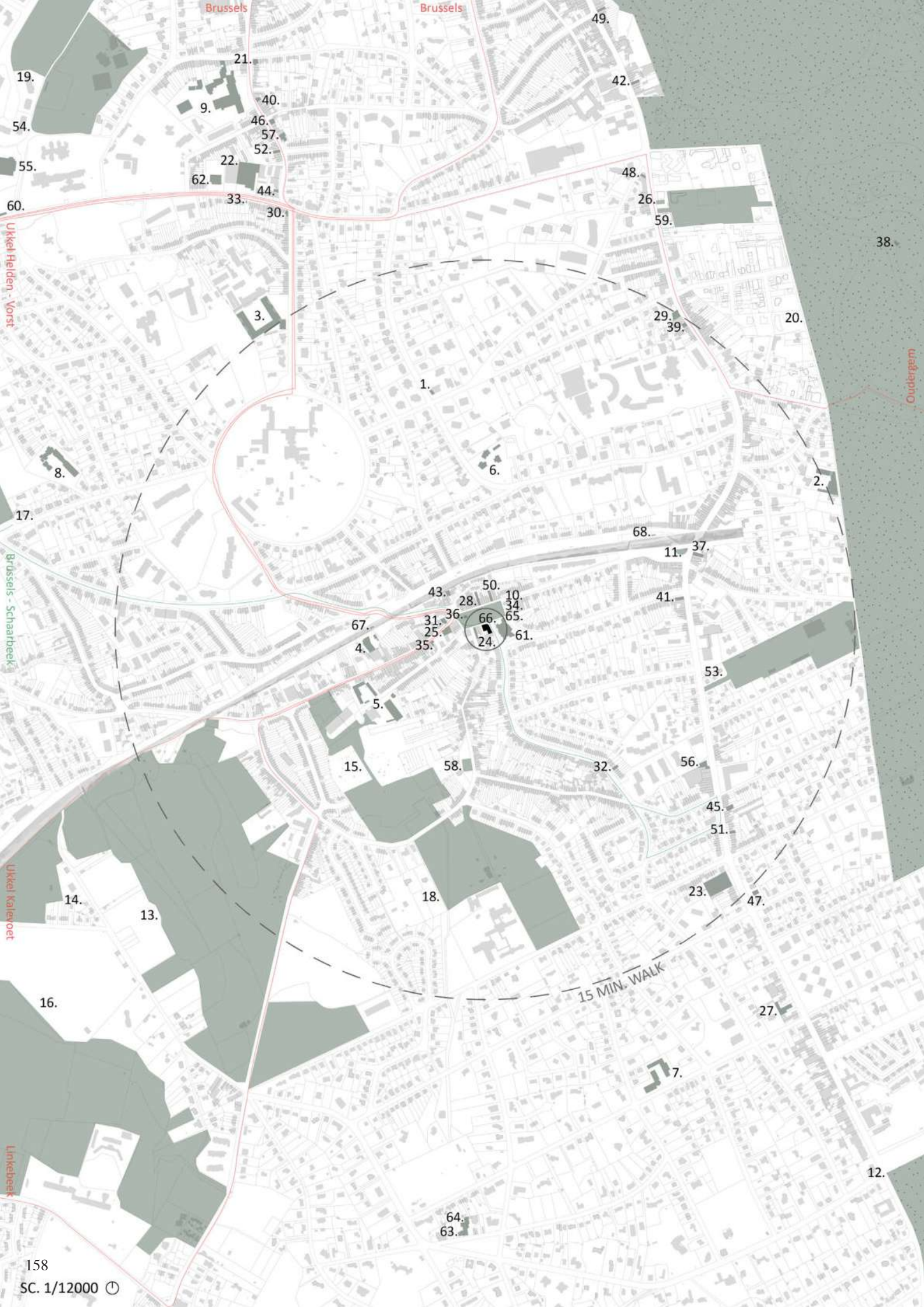
## MACRO

The macro map of the reception centre in Ukkel (p. 158) presents a similar number of social infrastructures as in Oudergem and Zaventem. Although libraries were absent in the research area, all the other categories were represented in Ukkel. The offer of museums [1] and squares [10-11] appears to be very limited. However, the two remaining subcategories of public institutions, schools [2-9] and parks and forests [12-20], do not disappoint. Despite the availability of schools, most minors attend OKAN schools located outside Ukkel. Furthermore, together the parks available to them cover a considerable surface area on the map. Especially Ter Kamerenbos [10], an offshoot of the Zoniënwood [12] that is located at around a 15-minute walk from the reception centre, offers an abundance of green space.

In the immediate surroundings of the reception centre, a concentration of social infrastructures in the “commerce” category can be found. The centre is located at the Sint-Jobsplein around which various functions are housed. In addition to residential buildings, there are small supermarkets, including night shops, and some restaurants. Every Monday morning, a market takes place there. Next to the reception centre, one can also find the Sint-Job church [61]. However, places of worship for other religions are not available within the 15-Minute City.

The minors who stay in the Ukkel reception centre do not seem to have many accessible sports facilities. The facilities in the area seem to be rather elitist sports clubs. However, the sports field Berg van Sint-Job [58] is the exception. It is part of the Antirides youth centre down the street and it is located close to the reception centre.

Finally, the public transportation network in Ukkel can be observed on the macro map. Close to the reception centre there are two train stations, Sint-Job [67] and Diesdelle [68]. And even more nearby, at the Sint-Jobsplein, there is both a bus stop and a tram stop. Especially the tram, which practically stops at the front door, and the busline that leads directly to the City of Brussels are frequently used by the residents at the reception centre. They use the public transport to reach their schools, which are located all over Brussels and beyond. The staff mentioned the location of the reception centre to be a great advantage. “They have access to many things, they find young people of their nationality, some have small jobs and the public transport is good to reach appointments which is also convenient for the staff” (social assistant, March 3, 2022).



Brussels

Brussels

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Ukkel Heideveld - Vorst

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Brussels - Schaarbeek

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Ukkel Kaleiveld

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16.

15 MIN. WALK

27.

7.

12.

64.

63.

158

SC. 1/12000

## PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS


### Libraries

None


### Museums

- 1. Museum of Arab Culture

### Schools

- 
- 2. Decroly
  - 3. Athénée Royal Uccle I
  - 4. Sint-Jozefschool Ukkel
  - 5. Ecole communale de Saint-Job
  - 6. Hamaide
  - 7. Eglantiers Communal School
  - 8. La Petite
  - 9. O.L.V. ten Bos

### Squares

- 
- 10. Sint-Jobsplein
  - 11. Square train station Diesdelle

### Parks and forests

- 
- 12. Zoniënwood
  - 13. Kauwberg
  - 14. Sauvagèrepark
  - 15. Avijlvalkte
  - 16. Engelandplateau
  - 17. Wolvendaelpark
  - 18. Het Vronerodepark
  - 19. Brugmanpark
  - 20. Ter Kamerenbos

## COMMERCE

### Food shops

- 
- 21. L'épicerie
  - 22. Delhaize Defré
  - 23. Delhaize Fort Jaco
  - 24. Louis Delhaize Molière
  - 25. Proxy Saint-Job
  - 26. Louis Delhaize Ter Kameren
  - 27. Carrefour express PRINCE D'ORA
  - 28. Carrefour express Ukkel Saint Job
  - 29. Carrefour express
  - 30. White Night
  - 31. White Night St-Job
  - 32. UCCLE Express
  - 33. Carrefour Express Uccle
  - 34. De markt van Sint-Job

### Restaurants [< € 6,1]

- 35. Les Baguettes d'Or
- 36. Chez Clémentine
- 37. Chez Eugène
- 38. Broebbeleir Uccle
- 39. Snack Ter Kameren
- 40. Snack Milad Sprl


- 41. Beergium BAR
- 42. Barabar
- 43. Le Refuge
- 44. De Kiosk

### Hair salons and barbers

- 45. Toni&Guy Fort Jaco
- 46. Lola Lagoa
- 47. Lucino Hairdresser
- 48. Salon Mouss
- 49. Mitchell's
- 50. Alain Dantine
- 51. DESSANGE Coiffeur Uccle-Waterloo
- 52. Js Coiffure

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Sports facilities

- 
- 53. Royal Racing Club
  - 54. Royal Léopold Club
  - 55. Zwembad Langeveld
  - 56. i-fitness
  - 57. Body Positive Studio
  - 58. Sports field Berg van Sint-Job
  - 59. Brussels Lawn Tennis Club

### Cinema and theatre


- 60. Théâtre du Ratinet - La Ferme Rose

## RELIGION

- 
- 61. Kerk Sint-Job van Brussel
  - 62. Sint-Marcuskerk Ukkel
  - 63. Unité Pastorale de l'Alliance Uccle
  - 64. Sint-Annakerk

## TRANSIT

- A. Bus  direction
- 65. Bus stop Sint-Jobplein

- B. Tram  direction
- 66. Tram stop Sint-Jobplein

### C. Train

- 67. Train station Sint-Job
- 68. Train station Diesdelle



### The interviewees

In 2016 the Red Cross reception centre in Ukkel limited its target group to unaccompanied minor boys. Similar to the OOC in Oudergem, it was only ‘on the spot’ and ad-hoc that the inhabitants were asked whether they were interested to give an interview. On the third of March 2022, on a Wednesday during the school holidays, four minors were willing to share their thoughts about their life in the reception centre. Three of them came from Afghanistan. In this study, they are called Yusuf, Davud and Yassin. The fourth interviewee, called Alan, originates from Syria. Both Yusuf and Alan are 17 years old, Yassin is 16 and Davud is a 15-year-old boy. Only Alan was recently transferred to the centre, while the other interviewees had already been living in the Ukkel reception centre for a year. Several members of the staff, including Z. Egglestan who gave a tour of the centre, provided further information for the meso and micro analysis of the reception centre.

Because of the school holidays, only a few boys were present at the time of the interviews. One of the social assistants knocked on the doors of the bedroom and explained the aim of the interviews. As the assistant encouraged him, Yusuf agreed to participate in this research. Due to a 5-year stay in Turkey, his journey from Afghanistan to Belgium took approximately 6 years, passing through twelve different countries. Once he arrived in Belgium, he stayed for about 20 days in the OOC in Steenokkerzeel, and was then transferred to the Ukkel reception centre. Later that day, the social assistant mentioned how surprising it was that Yusuf, who is having a hard time, took part in the conversation and even showed his room afterwards. “I’m glad he took part in the interview because he doesn’t get out much” (social assistant, personal communication, March 3, 2022). Later in the afternoon, a large group of residents returned to the centre after a soccer activity. After meeting them in the corridor, Davud and Alan decided to participate in the interview together. Davud, the youngest interviewee, gladly kicked off the talking and explained how he arrived in Ukkel. During eight months, Davud travelled in group from Afghanistan to Brussels. In turn, Alan had been on the move for three months. During the interview in March, he had already been living in Ukkel for about three months. Finally, Yassin agreed to join the interviews after he finished mopping the floor of the reception and the staff’s offices. The journey of this last interviewee had taken 6 months, by walking and by car he reached Brussels. All four boys have now been enlisted in a school, depending on whether they wanted to learn Dutch or French.

### The map

Ukkel is a municipality in the south of Brussels. Every interviewee mentioned a few places where they spend some of their time. Some talked about their schools, while others focussed on the places they visit during group activities, organised by the reception centre and its partners. The staff, too, mentioned some of the places where these activities take place, and those were also included in the meso map (pp. 162-163). A very popular way amongst the minors of spending their time appeared to be working out at the Basic-Fit [2], located just outside the macro map of the Ukkel reception centre. They can go independently, as soon as the centre has provided them with a subscription to the Basic-Fit. The sports facility is situated “15 minutes by tram from the centre” (social worker, personal communication, March 3, 2022) in the neighbourhood of Molière-Longchamps, near the border with Sint-Gillis. Following the Alsebergse Steenweg where the Basic-Fit is located, one arrives at the Park Wolvendael [4]. The park consists of several large grass fields, a small forest, winding pathways and a large playground on the upper hills of the park. It is a well-known park for the inhabitants of Ukkel, and various activities are organised in this 21,2-hectare park. A second park, even larger than the previous one, is Ter Kamerenbos [3]. Yassin frequents the park “to relax, to sport and to look around” (Yassin, personal communication, March 3, 2022). The name refers to a forest, rather than a park, as it branches off from the Zoniënwood (Visit Brussels, 2018). The green area, with a surface of no less than 123 hectares, is one of the largest parks in Brussels and is therefore very popular in the surrounding area. The different pathways allow for long promenades in the park. Most are stone and earth paths, and around the lake is an asphalt road that continues through the whole northern part. Here too, the social assistants organise activities for the minors. In the surroundings of the Red Cross building, two other places are frequently visited by the residents. The first one is the White Night shop [1] on the Sint-Jobsplein in front of the centre. The second one is the sports field pertaining to the youth centre Antirides [5], which is located only 400 meters south from the reception centre.

An important part of the boys’ time in the reception centre is spent at the secondary school that they attend on daily basis. After their arrival in the reception centre, the minors can choose to attend either a French or a Dutch speaking school. The staff then looks for an OKAN class for the minor. The Dutch schools where the Ukkel Red Cross reception centre sends their boys are the Sint Guido Institute in Anderlecht, the Institute

Anneessens Funck in the City of Brussels, the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Sint-Pieters-Woluwe, and finally the Sancta Maria Institute in Lembeek. Less frequently, the minors choose a French-speaking school such as the CESE E. Richard in Etterbeek, or the Athénée royal Leonardo Da Vinci in Anderlecht. A few interviewees mentioned which of these schools they attend, and how they get there every morning. Alan takes tram 9 to the Institute Anneessens Funck, located in the south-west of the Brussels Pentagon. In turn, Yusuf attends school in Sint-Pieters-Woluwe, at the Don Bosco Technical Institute. Going to class is part of the daily routine for these teenagers. Once the school hours are over, some stay in the centre of Brussels because “Brussel centrum is leuk” (Yassin, personal communication, March 3, 2022). Others meet with friends nearby the railway stations Brussel-Zuid and Brussel-Noord and several residents, those who have the Orange Card, joined a sports club to play football, volleyball, taekwondo or boxing. In the week-ends, the interviewees enjoy participating in activities of the Ukkel reception centre or they visit Brussels, while other residents prefer to stay in their rooms.

### The network

The centre in Ukkel mainly cooperates with organisations in Brussels. Most of these organisations are specifically focused on young people. Collaborations are also established with other Red Cross reception centres.

Maison des Jeunes L’Antirides

offers various activities for young people aged 12 to 26, in addition to their permanent facilities (kicker, internet access, table tennis, bar, garden). They organise artistic workshops, sports activities, homework support etc (Antirides Uccle, n.d.).



Dynamo International

is an NGO and a youth service that is active around the world in defending the fundamental rights of people, and children in particular, in situations of social exclusion (Dynamo International, n.d.).



Dynamo AMO vzw

works on socio-educational prevention in the environment of young people, in order to improve the relationship with their environment. They also organise social prevention actions so that young people’s needs are heard and their rights are respected (Dynamo AMO, n.d.).



Maison Babel

aims to support (former) unaccompanied foreign minors who want to carry out a life project and settle in Brussels independently. They contribute to the development of young people in exile through sustainable inclusion and by facilitating access to sustainable housing (Maison Babel, n.d.).



D’Broej vzw

wants to contribute to the emancipation (both individual and collective) of children and young people who grow up in a socially vulnerable context through the development of leisure-time initiatives (D’Broej, 2022).



Bon vzw

is the Brussels reception office for integration. Newcomers can go there for a free integration programme. They work closely together with ‘Huis van het Nederlands Brussel’ to teach newcomers Dutch (Bon, n.d.).

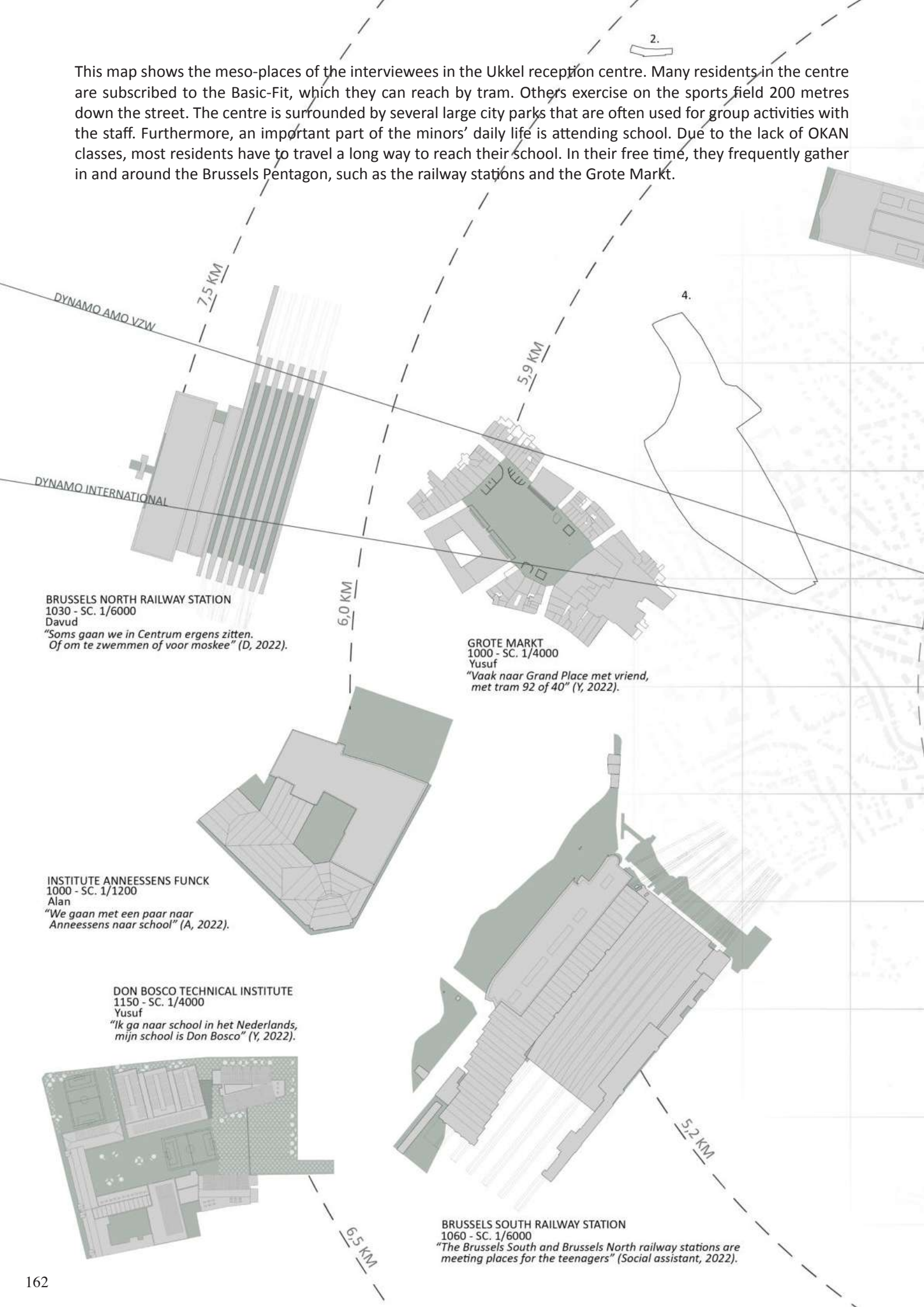


Jette Red Cross Reception Centre

has also cooperated with the centre in Ukkel (Croix-Rouge de Uccle, n.d.). Partnerships are established between different reception centres to set up projects for the benefit of the centres’ residents.



This map shows the meso-places of the interviewees in the Ukkel reception centre. Many residents in the centre are subscribed to the Basic-Fit, which they can reach by tram. Others exercise on the sports field 200 metres down the street. The centre is surrounded by several large city parks that are often used for group activities with the staff. Furthermore, an important part of the minors' daily life is attending school. Due to the lack of OKAN classes, most residents have to travel a long way to reach their school. In their free time, they frequently gather in and around the Brussels Pentagon, such as the railway stations and the Grote Markt.



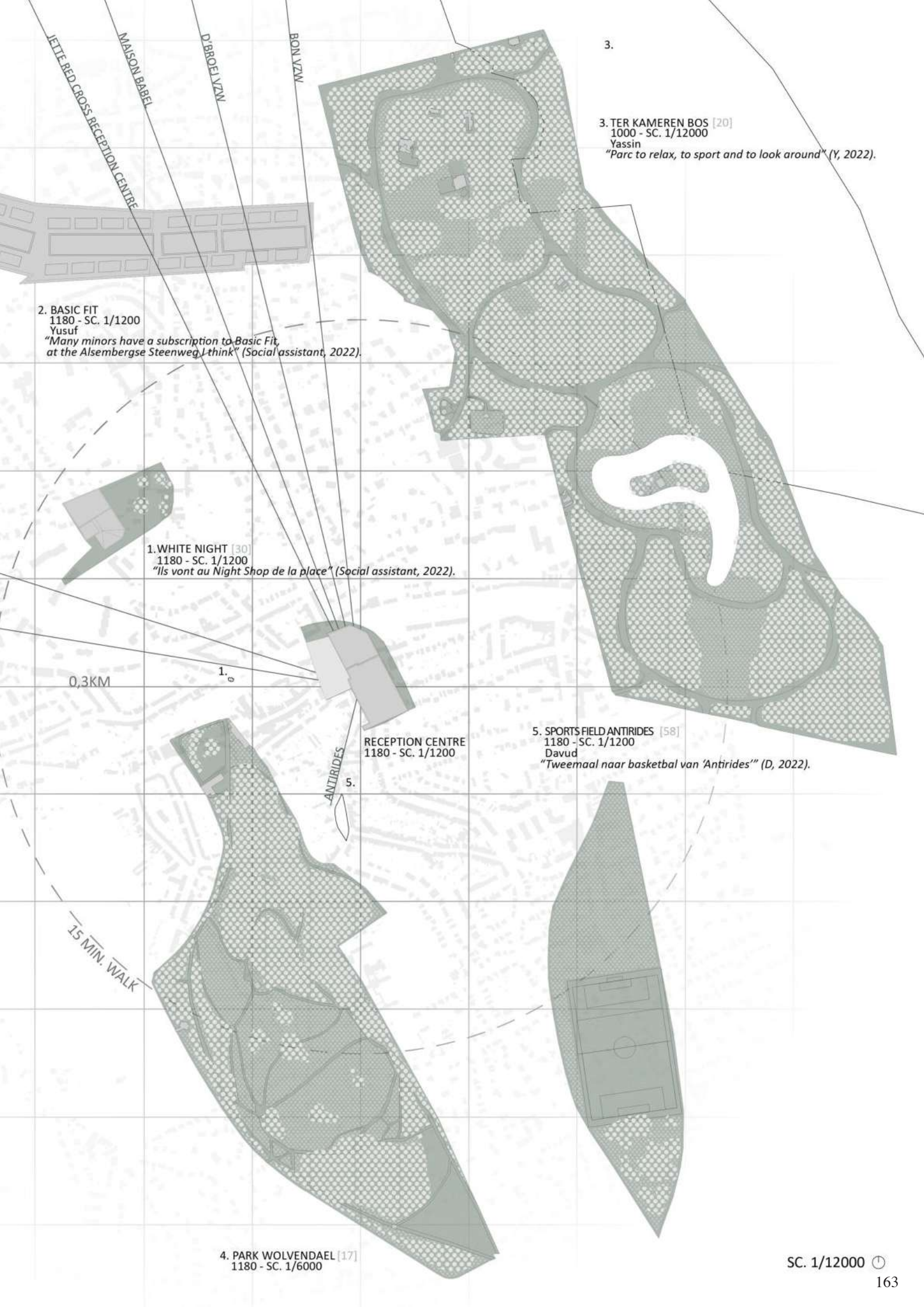
**BRUSSELS NORTH RAILWAY STATION**  
1030 - SC. 1/6000  
Davud  
*"Soms gaan we in Centrum ergens zitten. Of om te zwemmen of voor moskee" (D, 2022).*

**GROTE MARKT**  
1000 - SC. 1/4000  
Yusuf  
*"Vaak naar Grand Place met vriend, met tram 92 of 40" (Y, 2022).*

**INSTITUTE ANNESENS FUNCK**  
1000 - SC. 1/1200  
Alan  
*"We gaan met een paar naar Anneessens naar school" (A, 2022).*

**DON BOSCO TECHNICAL INSTITUTE**  
1150 - SC. 1/4000  
Yusuf  
*"Ik ga naar school in het Nederlands, mijn school is Don Bosco" (Y, 2022).*

**BRUSSELS SOUTH RAILWAY STATION**  
1060 - SC. 1/6000  
*"The Brussels South and Brussels North railway stations are meeting places for the teenagers" (Social assistant, 2022).*



JETTE RED-CROSS RECEPTION CENTRE  
MAISON BABEL  
D'ARBRELE VZW  
BON VZW

2. BASIC FIT  
1180 - SC. 1/1200  
Yusuf  
"Many minors have a subscription to Basic Fit, at the Alsebergse Steenweg, I think" (Social assistant, 2022).

3.  
3. TER KAMEREN BOS [20]  
1000 - SC. 1/12000  
Yassin  
"Parc to relax, to sport and to look around" (Y, 2022).

1. WHITE NIGHT [30]  
1180 - SC. 1/1200  
"Ils vont au Night Shop de la place" (Social assistant, 2022).

0,3KM

1. 0

RECEPTION CENTRE  
1180 - SC. 1/1200

5. SPORTS FIELD ANTIRIDES [58]  
1180 - SC. 1/1200  
Davud  
"Tweemaal naar basketbal van 'Antirides'" (D, 2022).

ANTIRIDES  
5.

15 MIN. WALK

4. PARK WOLVENDAEL [17]  
1180 - SC. 1/6000

SC. 1/12000

BRUSSELS NORTH RAILWAY STATION  
1030



GROTE MARKT  
1000



BRUSSELS SOUTH RAILWAY STATION  
1060



INSTITUTE ANNESENS FUNCK  
1000



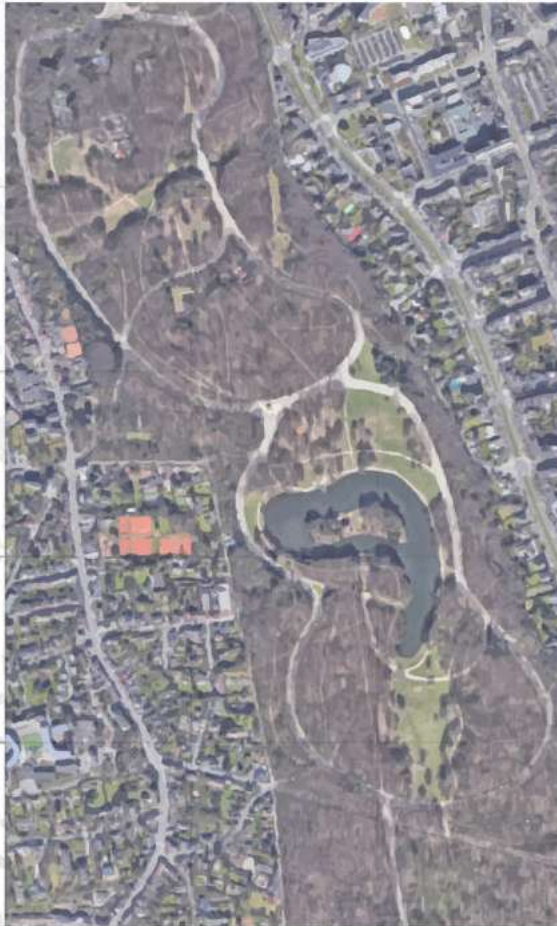
DON BOSCO TECHNICAL INSTITUTE  
1150



PARK WOLVENDAEL  
1180



TER KAMEREN BOS  
1000



SPORTS FIELD ANTIRIDES  
1180



WHITE NIGHT  
1180



BASIC FIT  
1180



In the surroundings of the reception centre, one notices the large green spaces where the residents go for a walk on their own or where activities are organised. The other meso-places represent the Brussels urbanity, where the youngsters hang out, attend school and explore the city in their spare time.

The reception centre in Ukkel is housed in two adjacent buildings that served as a nursery home until 2011. The structure of the buildings results from this function and no major modifications were made since. “Therefore, we have a lot of rooms and a few common spaces” (Z. Egglestan, personal communication, November 10, 2021). Today, approximately 70 unaccompanied minor boys, aged between 14 and 18, live together in Hamstraat 1. For lack of information from the archives in Ukkel or from the private owner of the building, the floor plans on the following page are based on emergency plans provided by the staff of the reception centre. Consequently, the floor plans only indicate the functions for the spaces that were shown during the visits.

### The reception centre

The reception centre at Ukkel is composed of two different buildings, one of which is a corner building at the Sint-Jobsplein. As in most reception centres, the reception desk is the first space one meets upon entering the front door. The staff offices are located adjacent to it. In front of the reception desk is an opening, without a door, to the bicycle storage and to the animation room. In the latter collective space, one can find two football tables, a television and a lot of open space because this room also serves as passageway to the corner building. Painted country flags decorate the walls of the animation room. After the interviews, a group of boys played a game of table football together with the social assistants. Leaving this room on the other side, one enters the second building. This is where the refectory is located, which takes up most of the surface of the ground floor. The facade of the dining room is almost entirely made of translucent glass panels, visually shielding the inhabitants from the street. When taking the adjacent staircase down to level -1, one finds the kitchen at the end of the corridor. This is, as in the other case studies, a kitchen for preparing the catering company’s dishes. A cooking class is organised for the residents only once a month. “There is no infrastructure to learn them to be autonomous” (Z. Egglestan, personal communication, March 3, 2022). The rest of this floor is occupied by technical rooms, storage space and laundry rooms. “Here the inhabitants can find the material for the chores they are assigned to” (Z. Egglestan, personal communication, November 10, 2021).

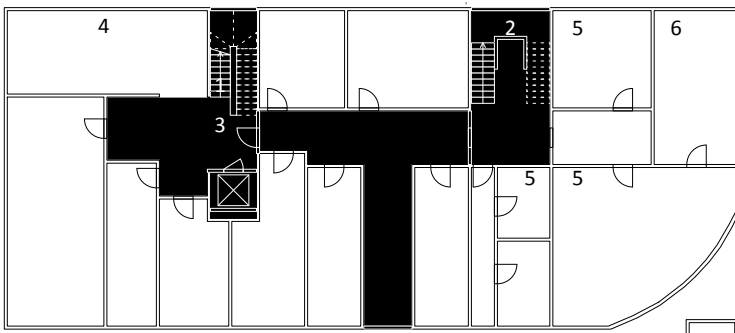
The corridors on the bedroom floors are quite large and give access to the collective spaces, the bedrooms, four toilets and four showers on each floor. The shower units, separated from one another by a wall, do not have curtains that could have visually separated the shower unit from the shared area in front of it. The large corridors also lead to the bedrooms, which are

mainly located in the first building on the street side. Some bedrooms are arranged for three boys, while the other ones house two inhabitants. The collective spaces, different on each floor, are located on the other side of the corridor. On the first floor there is a meeting room where the interviews took place, but since it is locked most of the time, it is not often used. One would conclude from the floor plans that the centre has a large amount of collective space. However, all the remaining black-coloured spaces on the first floor (p. 167) are empty spaces. This is because they are part of the emergency route, which is quite complex as the centre occupies two buildings that initially functioned independently; and because the fire protection requirements for reception centres are quite strict. No fixed furniture may block this passage and therefore, it is difficult to transform them into more user-friendly collective spaces.

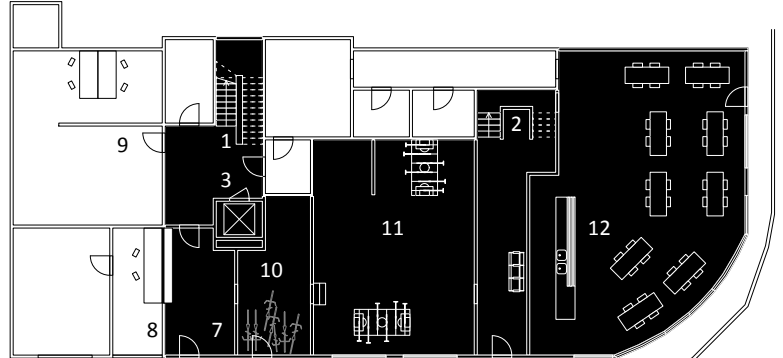
The second floor is similar to the previous one. There are an equal number of bedrooms and the emergency route follows the same path as before. In the corner of the second building is a staff meeting room, provided with a large table and some chairs. On the same level a quarantine bedroom with a bed, a table and a chair were installed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it was not clearly indicated where exactly this quarantine room is located. The same applies to the study room, which is located somewhere on level +2. Eventually, the last two floors are again organised quite similar to the first and the second floor. On the third floor, the room in the corner of the second building is used as a sports room. The study room for residents on this floor can be found at the opposite side of the corridor, in the first building. Davud mentioned that there also is a study room on the last floor, where he makes his homework after school.

SC. 1/350 ●

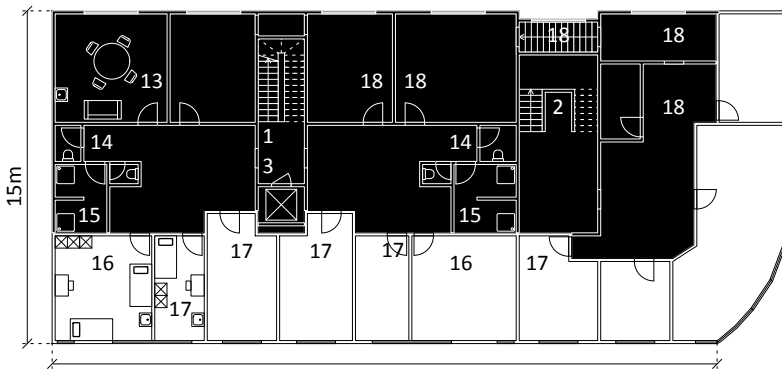
■ Collective space  
 ■ Outdoor space



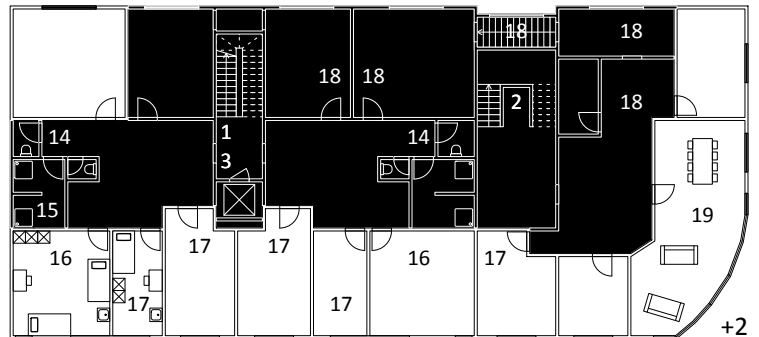
-1



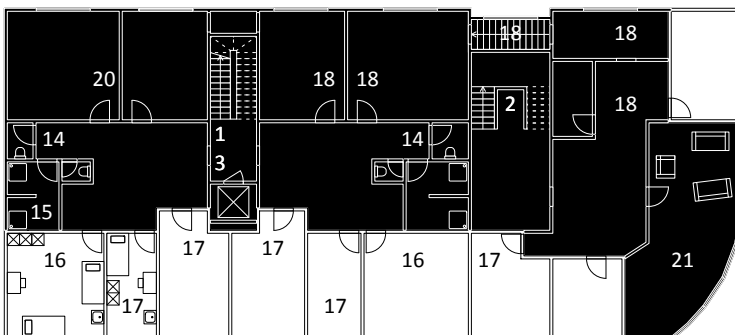
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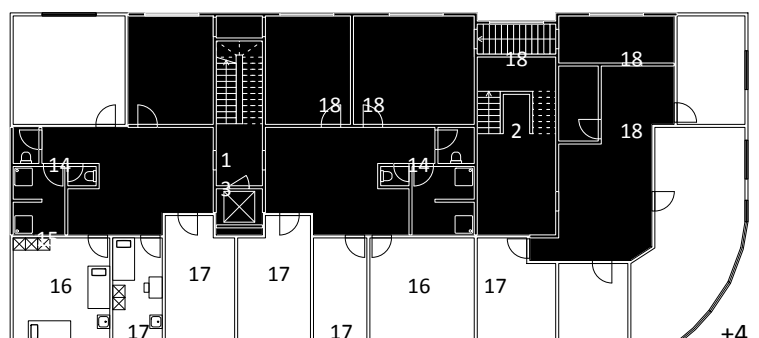
+1



+2



+3



+4

- |                     |                           |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Staircase A      | 12. Refectory             |
| 2. Staircase B      | 13. Meeting room          |
| 3. Elevator         | 14. Toilets               |
| 4. Kitchen          | 15. Shower room           |
| 5. Storage          | 16. Room for three minors |
| 6. Atelier          | 17. Room for two minors   |
| 7. Entrance         | 18. Emergency route       |
| 8. Reception        | 19. Staff meeting room    |
| 9. Staff office     | 20. Study room            |
| 10. Bicycle storage | 21. Sports room           |
| 11. Animation       |                           |





Fig. 5 The refectory in Ukkel.

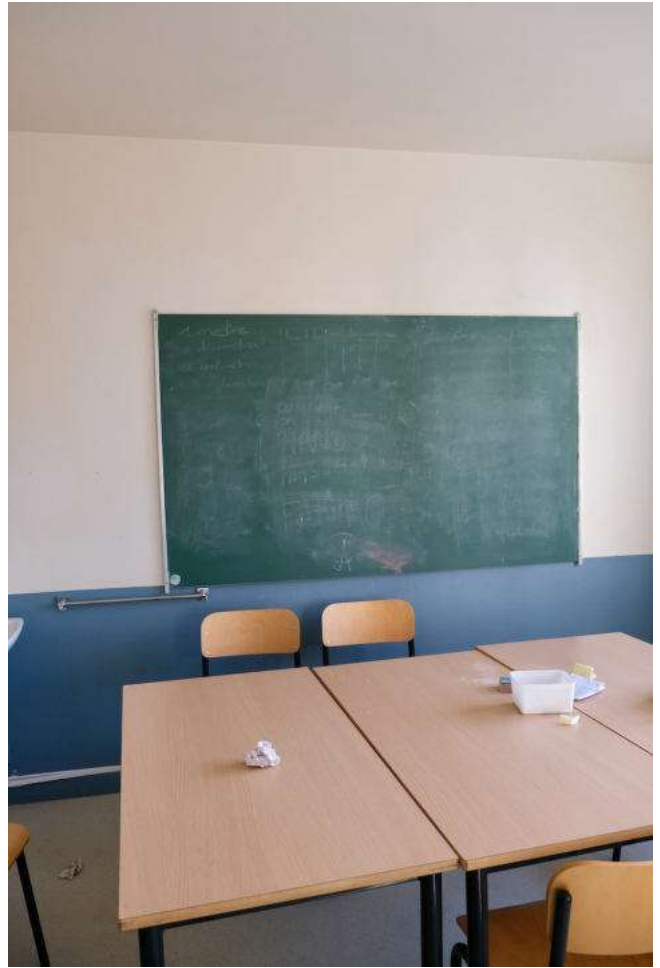


Fig. 6 The study room in Ukkel.



Fig. 7 Animation room. Note the flag of Pakistan that was damaged.



Fig. 8 The shower room in Ukkel.



Fig. 9 Empty room due to emergency route.



Fig. 10 Empty room due to emergency route.



Fig. 11 Empty room due to emergency route.



Fig. 12 Empty room due to emergency route.



### The rooms

During the first visit in the Ukkel reception centre, the staff showed what the bedrooms for two and three boys look like. Later on, in March, the first interviewee called Yusuf also demonstrated his room. A room for three minors contains one single bed parallel to the window, and one bunk bed perpendicular to the façade. As usual, there are as many lockers as the number of residents occupying the room. Each room is also furnished with a table, a chair and a sink. All the interviewees are, however, assigned to a two-persons room with only a single bunk bed. Yusuf and his roommate have become close friends during their stay in the Ukkel reception centre: “Altijd samen lachen, veel muziek” (Yusuf, personal communication, March 3, 2022). When he was asked to describe his room, he laughed and briefly summarised it with the words “kleren overal” (Yusuf, personal communication, March 3, 2022). Yusuf and his friend prefer to stay in their bedroom most of the time. Sometimes they exercise there with the equipment they can borrow from the centre, or they watch videos on their smartphones. The two boys decorated their room with some coloured lights around the railings of the bunk bed and the “poster van ‘Shishko’ aan muur” (Yusuf, personal communication, March 3, 2022). In the other rooms that were shown, too, a few pictures or posters seemed to be the only decoration applied. This room also includes two lockers, a table, a chair and a washbasin. Under the window, something unusual can be noticed. Z. Egglestan, who gave the tour through the centre, critically commented: “The second radiator was simply placed in front of the old one, it is cheaper than removing it” (Z. Egglestan, personal communication, March 3, 2022). In addition, Yusuf mentioned the lack of space in the bedrooms. The same feeling was shared by the three other interviewees.

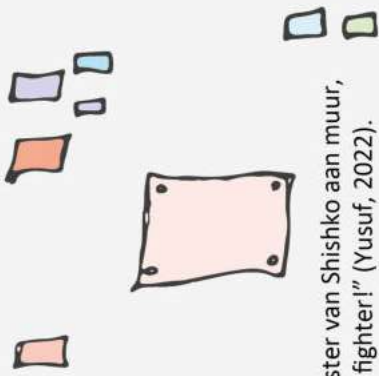
At the moment of the interview, Davud explained that he temporarily sleeps alone in his bedroom because the previous roommate had already left for Phase 3 of the reception system. His next roommate would arrive on the following Monday. “Ik ben altijd in mijn kamer” (Davud, personal communication, March 3, 2022). During the interview, Davud came across as an ambitious young man. Although he attends school in Dutch language, he is also learning French at the same time. After school hours he continues to study and do homework, either in his room or in the study rooms in the reception centre.

The third interviewee, called Alan, spends a lot of his time in his room to watch YouTube, play games, read and make his homework. He shares a room with a good Syrian friend, but even so “a room is too little for two” (Alan, personal communication, March 3, 2022). When he saw a picture of a bedroom in the OOC in Oudergem, he was surprised about the size. “And this room is also bigger than mine” (Alan, personal communication, March 3, 2022) claimed Alan about the meeting room where the interview took place. The fourth interviewee is Yassin. Just like his fellow residents, he describes his room as being too small. “Slechtste aan centrum is eten en room” (Yassin, personal communication, March 3, 2022).

This drawing was created using testimonies from Yusuf and Davud, as well as the social worker who guided us through the building. Observations during the visit were also integrated into the drawing. The rooms in Uccle are arranged for two or three persons and have each a sink.



Does your room look like this one?  
"Mijn kamer is slechter, heel klein, oh dit is mooie kamer" (Davud, 2022).



"Ja, poster van Shishko aan muur, is a fighter!" (Yusuf, 2022).

"The second radiator was simply placed in front of the old one, it is cheaper than removing it" (Z. Egglestan, 2021).



The curtains were closed and you could already smell the weed from the corridor (Observation, 2022).

"Each newcomer receives a basket with the basic necessities. This is also their laundry" (Z. Egglestan, 2022).



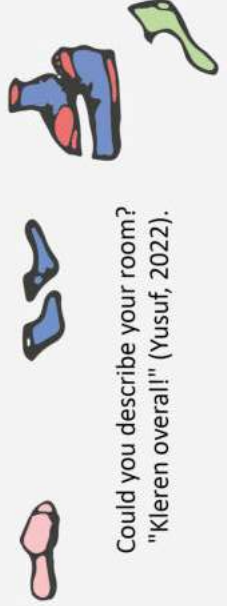
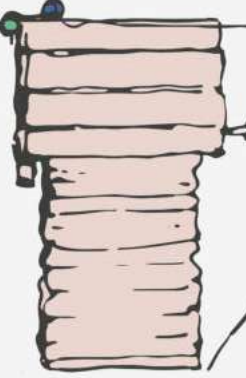
"We decorate the bed met lampjes" (Yusuf, 2022).



"Ik ben altijd op mijn kamer en kijk veel Youtube" (Davud, 2022).



"Één vriend in kamer, altijd samen lachen, veel muziek" (Yusuf, 2022).



Could you describe your room?  
"Kleren overall!" (Yusuf, 2022).

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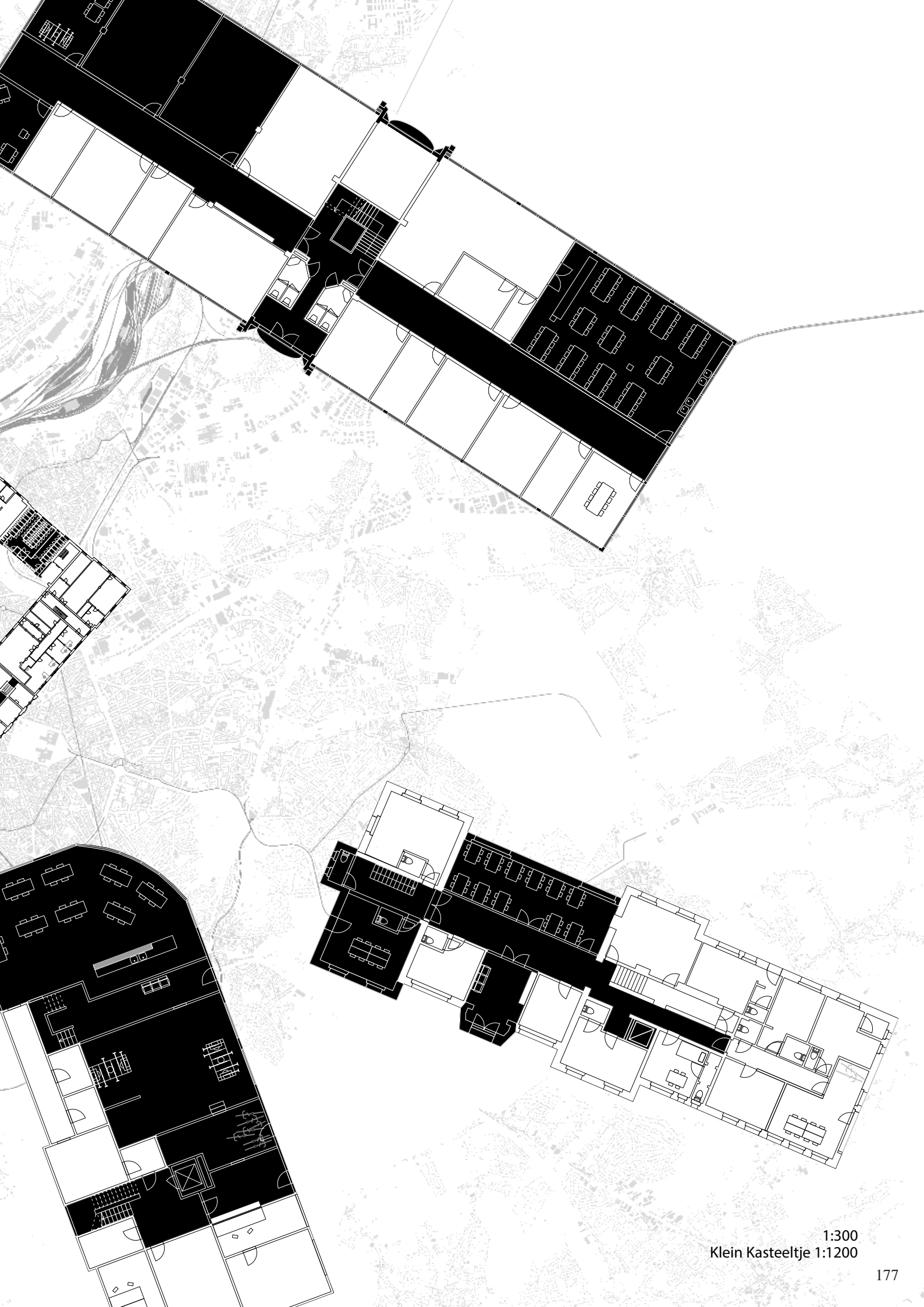
- Fig. 1.: Google. (n.d.). [Google Maps screenshot: The reception centre of Ukkel (corner building and building on the left)]. <https://www.google.com/maps/@50.794227,4.3662295,3a,89.9y,205.06h,94.39t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sehjcsn4zoEkU0fVcZwFcFw!2e0!7i16384!8i8192>
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- Fig. 3.: Own picture. (2021, November 10). "Meso" image: the frequently visited Ter Kamerenbos [Photograph].
- Fig. 4.: Own picture. (2021, November 10). "Micro" image: the refectory in Ukkel [Photograph].
- Fig 5.: Own picture. (2021, November 10). The refectory in Ukkel [Photograph].
- Fig 6.: Own picture. (2021, November 10). The study room in Ukkel [Photograph].
- Fig 7.: Own picture. (2021, November 10). Animation room. Note the flag of Pakistan that was damaged [Photograph].
- Fig 8.: Own picture. (2021, November 10). The shower room in Ukkel [Photograph].
- Fig 9.: Own picture. (2021, November 10). Empty room due to emergency route [Photograph].
- Fig 10.: Own picture. (2021, November 10). Empty room due to emergency route [Photograph].
- Fig 11.: Own picture. (2021, November 10). Empty room due to emergency route [Photograph].
- Fig 12.: Own picture. (2021, November 10). Empty room due to emergency route [Photograph].







# LESSONS FROM BRUSSELS



# A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

## FLEXIBILITY - ADAPTABILITY

Flexibility and adaptability are both terms that are used to describe the capability for change. However, Steven Groák (1992) has made a distinction between ‘capable of different social uses’ and ‘capable of different physical arrangements’ to define adaptability and flexibility respectively. In the context of the asylum centres, both seem relevant. Not only does the reception of asylum seekers take place within structures that previously served different functions. There should also be some scope for changing the physical arrangements to allow for the fluctuating influx of asylum seekers to be accommodated at all times without significant implications for the comfort of the residents. Often, an increasing influx results in increasing the capacity of the existing centres with all subsequent social consequences. This overcrowding of the centres does not facilitate cohabitation. Sharing the room with a number of strangers was mentioned in all centres as the greatest difficulty of living in a reception centre. “À 6 dans la chambre, très difficile pour la culture. Pas seulement la langue, mais aussi la mentalité et l’âge.” (Camilla, personal communication, May 1, 2022).

### A. RESPONSIVENESS

The reception centres must be flexible to be able to respond to the wants and needs of its inhabitants. This means providing space and possibilities for the residents’ habits and practices. Nutrition, for instance, was repeatedly mentioned as an important practice, both at the meso and micro level.

Food appears to be a motive for moving around in the city.

Markets as well as ethnic food shops and restaurants are poles of attraction in the city. Some of the interviewees liked to enjoy the cuisine of their home countries in their free time, which they missed in the reception centre. Moreover, many of them were not very enthusiastic about the meals in the centre, provided by large catering companies, and would like to have access to a kitchen. In some of the centres this is already possible upon reservation, but since this is usually limited to one day a week with a capacity of a few inhabitants, this is not sufficient. In addition, there is a general lack of study areas. The minors have duty of education and adults who are learning a language could also use a place to successfully complete this. But because of the lack of space in the centres, the asylum seekers’ wants and needs can only be answered inadequately.

This shortage of space is inherent to the centres located in the cities, which leads to an overload of functions in the few collective spaces.

“There is a TV room, but in there you’ll also find a pool table, games, a kicker table, a small library, some couches... There are too many activities for one room. When I want to watch television, others are playing at the pool table in front of me” (Abel, personal communication, February 25, 2022). It should also be noted that the reception structure is organised in a generic way. This raises the question to what extent the different needs of the different target groups are taken into account. On the macro scale, this could be considered when implanting a new centre. For example, centres for unaccompanied minors are to be located in the proximity of OKAN schools. But also on the micro scale, the collective spaces can be assigned a purpose in line with the specificity of the target group.

### B. IMPROVISATION

In the lack of space and facilities, the inhabitants are often left to improvise. Moving furniture or using bed sheets to obtain a minimum of privacy, taping the plinths to protect against vermin, or the “frigos locaux” that dangle from the windows of the Zaventem reception centre are some of the inventive solutions that the residents apply. In addition to sleeping, the bed is also given numerous other functions such as a clothing rack, a place to study or a dining table. An accumulation of functions can thus also be noted in the bedrooms, with consequences for the hygiene, about which numerous comments were made during the interviews. Of course, this differs from centre to centre, and so do the furnishings. For example, not every centre has basic furnishings such as a chair or table in the bedroom. This is again due to lack of space and over-crowdedness of the centres. The staff of the centres are also forced to improvise due to the lack of space and/or investment resources.

The leftover buildings in which they have to organise shelter are all too often “niet gemaakt om in te wonen” (Darlita, personal communication, February 25, 2022).

And because of the gap between operator and private owner, investments often fail to materialise and permission is always required to make changes to the infrastructure (E. Abdullah, personal communication, February 25, 2022). Think of the heaters in Ukkel, which were simply placed in front of the old ones as if the lack of space was not already a problem. Or the sanitary facilities that have been installed in containers on the parking lots of the Zaventem reception centre, affecting the residents’ comfort. Moreover, the “temporary” centres, which often operate longer than expected, receive limited investment resources from Fedasil

as well. As a result, the investments that are already limited, barely take place. They are reduced to the minimum to enable people to live there.

### C. HUMAN RESILIENCE

However, the greatest form of flexibility comes from the residents of the centres that have arrived in a completely new social and spatial environment. They find themselves already in a precarious situation and the living conditions often cause them additional stress. In particular, the lack of privacy is a concern for many, which will be discussed in more detail later on in this thematic analysis. “Il n’y a pas de vie privée, mais après beaucoup de temps on s’habitue” (Yousra, personal communication, May 1, 2022). However, an advantage for the inhabitants of the Brussels centres can be found on the macro scale. Their location in the city means that there is a wide range of infrastructures and opportunities in the vicinity. Moreover, it provides them with a public transportation network that facilitates their mobility.

### TIME - TEMPORALITY

A second theme that is central to the reception system are the concepts of time and temporality. The whole system is structured according to the three phases, between which people are “dispatched” to different locations. During their stay in the centres, they are in limbo, waiting for a verdict. Yet over time, both the centres and their residents develop a certain routine. Separated from the rest of society, this group has a different “tempo”, a different “social time scale”, using Lefebvre’s terms. While the rest of society continues, they are living to the rhythms of the centre.

#### A. ARRIVAL

The asylum reception system in Belgium consists of different phases. The needs and wishes of the residents are different for each phase. Firstly every asylum seeker must register at Klein Kasteeltje. Their stay in the arrival centre is called phase one. Minors, on the other hand, are hosted in an OOC during this first phase. However, at certain times of large newcomer flows, immediate entry into the system is not always guaranteed. Single men in particular can sometimes queue for several days outside Klein Kasteeltje. Families and unaccompanied minors are prioritised because their vulnerability is considered to be higher. Every day, at 2 pm, a welcome speech is given to the new arrivals: “We always start the speech with ‘You are in Belgium, Brussels, and you have applied for international protection and asylum’” (M. Meirlaen, personal communication, December 21, 2021). Residents of Klein Kasteeltje stay

there until a place becomes available in a suitable reception centre of the second phase. They must check the “Transfer List” in the courtyard to see when they will be transferred to their next destination. During this short stay in the arrival centre, some of the asylum seekers do not seem to be interested in exploring the city yet.

“Velen bevinden zich nog in een post-traumatische fase. Ze blijven liever op hun kamer.” (M. Meirlaen, personal communication, December 21, 2021).

The stay of unaccompanied minors in the OOCs is somewhat longer, about four weeks. During these weeks, they receive lessons on citizenship and activities are organised. But due to this relatively short period of stay, the activities and cooperation with, for example, sports clubs, are limited. In practice, the transfer system is more slowly due to a shortage of places in the centres of phase 2.

#### B. ROUTINE

Once arrived in a reception centre, everyone is assigned a bed. In many cases, this sleeping place remains the same throughout the entire asylum procedure. However, the duration of the procedure varies greatly. Some residents receive an answer to their asylum application after only a few months. While others watch their roommates leave and newcomers arrive during their years in the centre. Hadiya and her grandson, for example, have already been living in the Zaventem reception centre for three years. Naturally, routines are developed during this period, different for each resident. Minors are enrolled in schools, which are sometimes located far from the reception centre, depending on the supply of OKAN-classes. Adults, on the other hand, have to organise their own schedules. The Orange Card or Immatriculation Certificate (AI) plays an important role. This certificate is a provisional residence permit for an asylum seeker which states whether the person in question is allowed to work or not (Fedasil, n.d.). One receives such a card if one initially received Annex 26. This annex is issued by the Immigration Office after an application for international protection has been lodged (Fedasil, n.d.). Four months after submitting the asylum application, one can get a stamp on this card, which makes it possible to work or take language classes (Fedasil Zaventem, n.d.). Through work, residents can find something to do, meet new people, practise their language skills and, of course, earn a little money.

Both at night and during the day, residents enter and leave the rooms according to their daily routines or appointments. Some rooms studied in this research house six different people, who live together on 18m<sup>2</sup>. Of course, it is not always easy to harmonise their different routines.

Camilla, for example, was advised by her psychologist to maintain a fixed routine against depression.

It is therefore important for her to be able to continue this. Also religious practices are often practised by the residents in their rooms. Although Hadiya was able to set up a prayer corner in her room, she is one of the few interviewees who had this possibility since she is staying in a family room.

Meanwhile, the centres are trying to build up their own routine. Three times a day, for instance, a meal can be consumed in the canteen during the scheduled time slots. But every culture has different dietary habits and traditions, which are difficult to maintain in this institutional environment. “Aujourd’hui, c’est le dernier jour du Ramadan” (Yousra, personal communication, May 1, 2022). Furthermore, the reception centres also organise chores in the building, such as cleaning. The inhabitants can then earn a little extra, and at the same time maintain the residence and spend their time in the centre. In their free time, they can also participate in the activities organised by the staff and their partners. These activities are noncommittal, and by no means all residents participate. At night, the situation is different in the various centres. Several centres keep to an evening curfew and shut their doors at a certain hour. In Jette the doors close at 11 pm. In Zaventem, on the other hand, the reception centre remains open all night for people who work night shifts.

### C. APPROPRIATION

The resident’s bed and the surrounding wall can be considered his or her only personal space in the room. Although the procedure may take months or years, most do not actively decorate their sleeping area. Only a few pictures, posters, decorative lamps and a lot of clothes were spotted during the room visits. However, this is also due to the fact that these shared bedrooms do not encourage residents to personalise them. In the family rooms, there seemed to be more appropriation. Since it is their private room, they can arrange it as they wish. Furniture was moved around, prayer corners created or even plants installed to make it more homely.

Abel, however, also decorates the collective spaces in the reception centre with paintings on the walls.

“I want to make it feel as my home as much as possible” (Abel, personal communication, February 25, 2022).

A few minors from the OOC in Oudergem also hung their works of art, which they had made together during an artistic workshop, in the polyvalent room.

### PRIVACY - COLLECTIVENESS - PUBLICNESS

Different ranges from private to public exist in this research. These ranges are primarily related to the social relationships between individuals, which are influenced by the physical environment that frames them. “Privacy is the exclusive access of a person to a realm of his own” (Van Den Haag, 1971). The right to “privacy” is almost overlooked by the spatial framework in the reception centres. The infrastructure leaves no room for privacy in these conditions of intense cohabitation, with the inhabitants mainly concerned with the visual and acoustical aspects. The notion of “publicness” is mainly related to the macro and meso sites where people gather and have different interrelationships than within the segregated reception centres. It accumulates in the great variety of social infrastructures, though in different gradations. Finally, “collectiveness” is situated on the spectrum between privacy and publicness. “Collective means people share it, but in different ways. (...) Collective includes different shades of individual or collective use, it operates on public as well as on private properties, it can go together with being exposed or with intimacy.” (Scheerlinck, 2013). The notion of “collectiveness” is closely related to the cohabitation of individuals and of social groups in the centres. This takes place in the few common rooms in the centres, the so-called “collective spaces”, but also in the bedrooms.

#### A. PRIVACY

The lack of privacy in the reception centres was mentioned repeatedly during the interviews and a residents’ survey conducted in the Zaventem reception centre also confirmed this to be one of the residents’ main concerns (E. Abdullah, personal communication, November 3, 2021). The spatial structure of the reception centres pays little attention to this dimension of the living environment. “The rooms are too small, there is little privacy, it is more like a colocation” (social assistant Jette, personal communication, May 1, 2022).

The distinction must be made between visual and acoustical forms of privacy.

The curtains that are used as doors in the dormitories of Klein Kasteeltje are a good example for the visual

aspect. Where such means are absent, the residents themselves look for solutions such as the moving of furniture or the use of bed sheets to obtain visual barriers. But the acoustics also play a role. Residents often complained about the phoning or snoring of roommates or even noise from residents in neighbouring rooms. “Muren als papier, mijn kind kan niet slapen” (Darlita, personal communication, February 25, 2022). The latter follows from the fact that the leftover buildings were often intended for other functions and the profound renovations that such intense cohabitation requires are not carried out. Naturally, the level of privacy in family rooms is considerably better than in the rooms shared with strangers. On the one hand, this is because they are shared with people they are used to live with and who are therefore accepted within their private sphere. On the other hand, it is also because they are less overcrowded as each family has its own room. But even in rooms of this type, zones were demarcated to create some personal space. Finally, the lack of storage space for personal belongings can also be considered part of privacy. This is also related to hygiene in the bedrooms.

## B. COLLECTIVENESS

Cohabitation in the reception centres is often difficult. The bedroom is the place where the most intense form of cohabitation takes place. This was also mentioned in the interviews as the greatest bottleneck of the centres. “Slechtste aan centrum is eten en room” (Yassin, personal communication, March 3, 2022). When allocating rooms, no attention is paid to origin, language or age. This is only logical from a practical point of view, as there are often hardly any free beds. It is per se a good thing that they come into contact with and learn about other cultures. “Je suis très ouverte d’apprendre d’autres cultures, mais elles ne sont pas toutes comme ça, elles ont des préjugés” (Camilla, personal communication, May 1, 2022). However, the language barrier considerably complicates communication among roommates, among whom conflicts are not uncommon. Therefore, transfers to a different room within the centres are not excluded. And not only on the micro scale is the language barrier a daily recurring theme for asylum seekers, just think of the limited number of OKAN schools in the educational system. Furthermore, culture-specific norms can also cause discomfort. For example, Darlita testified that she was often stared at by certain residents because she does not wear a headscarf (Darlita, personal communication, February 25, 2022). Furthermore, she found it uncomfortable to pass men on her way to the showers located outside in containers, and also the animation room in the Zaventem reception centre is rarely visited by the female residents. The implications of living together with men and women is a concern in the centres that house different target

groups, even if they are placed in different wings of the building. Individuals who struggle with gender-related experiences from the past are placed in a centre that exclusively houses men or women.

The pressure on living together in the bedrooms could be reduced by providing more collective space. The residents could spend more time outside the bedroom and encounters could also be encouraged. The staff of the shelters also repeatedly mentioned this shortcoming. “There is a lack of space for conviviality” (social assistant Jette, personal communication, May 1, 2022). As mentioned earlier, there is not only a lack of recreational space, but also of specific collective spaces such as a kitchen and study rooms.

“There is no infrastructure to learn them to be autonomous” (Z. Egglestan, pers. com., 10 November, 2021).

Finally, the presence of an outdoor space appears to be appreciated by residents. This would offer them the peace and quiet they lack inside the building.

## C. PUBLICNESS

Relaxation is also a motive for moving around at the scale of the city. It drives residents towards parks and forests, which was striking in the meso analyses. “I like to go to the woods to walk, because my mind is free” (Joseph, personal communication, February 22, 2022). And also the staff in Oudergem was convinced of the positive effect of green space in the surroundings.

As much as the peace and quiet of the parks attracts them, it is also the hustle and bustle of the city that they are looking for in their free time.

Tourist sites as well as hotspots where features of their particular culture can be found are important poles of attraction. For example, Matongé in Elsene or the Gentssesteenweg in Molenbeek were mentioned in the interviews. It seems to be a way of escaping from life in the reception centre. Again, an advantage of the reception centres located in urban environments. “In Brussels, one has the possibility to escape” (social assistant Jette, personal communication, May 1, 2022). Hence the importance of the provision of these social infrastructures, reflected in the macro analysis. Parks and squares are among the most important public spaces for the inhabitants of the reception centres, also due to their accessibility. “There is no single public sphere or a single private sphere in society. There are many spheres, and which are public or private depends on who you are.” (Anderson, 2017, p. 44).

# A POSSIBILITY FOR CHANGE?

An inclusive reception system would require radical reform. Moreover, it would mean that such socially segregated places as studied in this research do not exist. Nevertheless, this study seeks to explore what is possible within the existing framework. As the previous thematic analysis revealed, certain bottlenecks recur in different degrees in each of the reception centres. The question is whether and how these problems could be tackled to some extent in the different centres. Or does the existing situation offer no room for improvement without adapting the occupancy of the buildings? In what follows, some of the most burning problems across the reception centres are used as an instrument to investigate whether there is a possibility for change.

## A. PRIVACY

Privacy is one of the most prominent problems within the reception centres. The concept of privacy here implies both acoustical and visual privacy, as well as the storage of personal belongings. In this exercise, the dimensions and occupancy of the rooms determine the extent to which this issue can be tackled. By means of axonometries (pp. 184-185), based on the micro-analyses, it is explored which reception centres allow for this issue to be addressed and what a possible solution could look like.

Acoustical privacy appears to be the most challenging issue to tackle. A key factor here is the occupancy of the rooms, as the sound of all the inhabitants accumulates there. Acoustic barriers, however, require drastic adjustments to the infrastructure, for which the space is not designed. The installation of acoustic panels or suchlike could possibly be a minimal improvement in large-scale dormitories like in Klein Kasteeltje. However, the effectiveness of this intervention seems so low that the issue of acoustical privacy in each of the centres is considered as “unimprovable within the existing”, without reducing the occupancy levels.

In terms of visual privacy, however, there does seem to be some potential for improvement. The intervention that is being suggested here builds on the idea of the curtains that are used as doors in Klein Kasteel on the one hand, and the bed sheets that the residents of the Zaventem reception centre tied around the bunk beds on the other hand. A potential design is presented whereby each (bunk) bed is visually separated from the



others using curtains. As a result, separate compartments are created inside the room to alleviate the intense cohabitation. Each resident can be lying in bed without being watched, as the bed itself forms the barrier between the two people in the bunk beds. It was also considered whether the lockers could function as a barrier, but this appeared to be spatially impossible inside these rooms. Furthermore, the flexibility of the curtains allows residents to decide whether to open them during the day. Finally, it could be beneficial to the visual privacy to provide each resident with a personal bedside light. This would allow each resident to maintain their personal day-night rhythm without disturbing their roommates. For example, people working at night, as mentioned during the interviews at the Zaventem reception centre, would no longer have to awake the entire room when arriving.



In the Oudergem OOC and the Zaventem and Jette reception centres, the dimensions of the room allow a small surface area to be integrated into the separate units alongside the bed. This is not the case at the Ukkel reception centre, as preference was given to the replacement of the bunk bed with two single beds. As a result, each resident has an individual unit. This is the only case study where sufficient space was available to allow this. In Klein Kasteeltje, however, this arrangement is already present in the current state. The single men and women get an individual unit within the dormitories with a bed and a locker. This unit is separated from the other units and the shared corridor by gyproc walls and curtains. Consequently, for the visual aspect of privacy, there seems to be little room for improvement in Klein Kasteeltje, where the problem is rather the acoustics. The axonometry of Klein Kasteeltje presents the supposed current state, based on the micro-analysis.

The system proposed for the improvement of the visual aspect of privacy also offers the possibility of expanding the storage space for personal belongings. This storage space is in every centre limited to the individual locker in the bedroom. The testimonies revealed that clothes and other belongings were often found lying around in the room due to the lack of storage facilities. The rails of the curtains could potentially also be used as a rack for clothes hangers or other storage systems. This is interesting from a spatial point of view in rooms where the curtain plane does not coincide with the edge of the bed, for example in Oudergem and the reception centre in Jette. In the other reception centres, similar space efficient storage systems can be used, for example under the bed. Increasing the amount of storage space could also improve order and hygiene in the bedrooms.

The aim of this thinking exercise is to illustrate that there is potential for improvement, even if one cannot speak of an optimal situation or complete solutions. Nevertheless, small-scale interventions can already have an impact on an individual's comfort and experience. But in order to effect a change on the scale of the centre and reverse its routine, a combination of spatial interventions and shifts in social management are required. In what follows, this is explored through a second key bottleneck of the reception centres: "collectiveness".

 ACOUSTICAL PRIVACY  
 ~~ACOUSTICAL PRIVACY~~

 VISUAL PRIVACY  
 ~~VISUAL PRIVACY~~

 STORAGE SPACE  
 ~~STORAGE SPACE~~

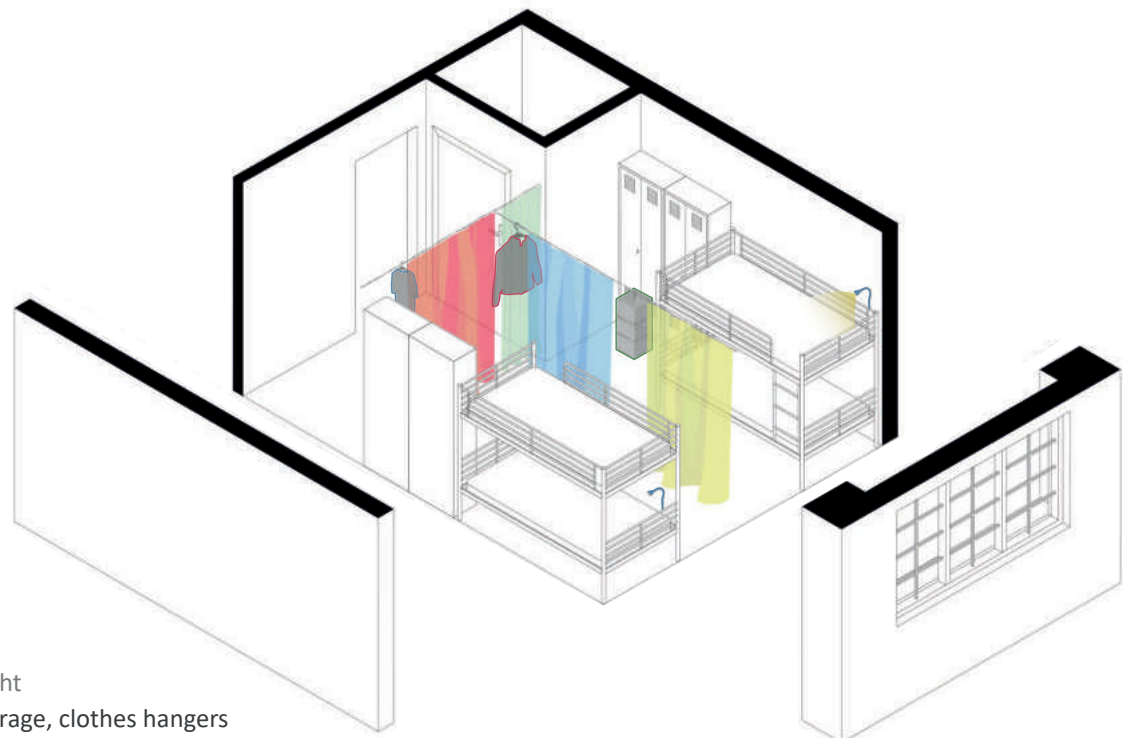
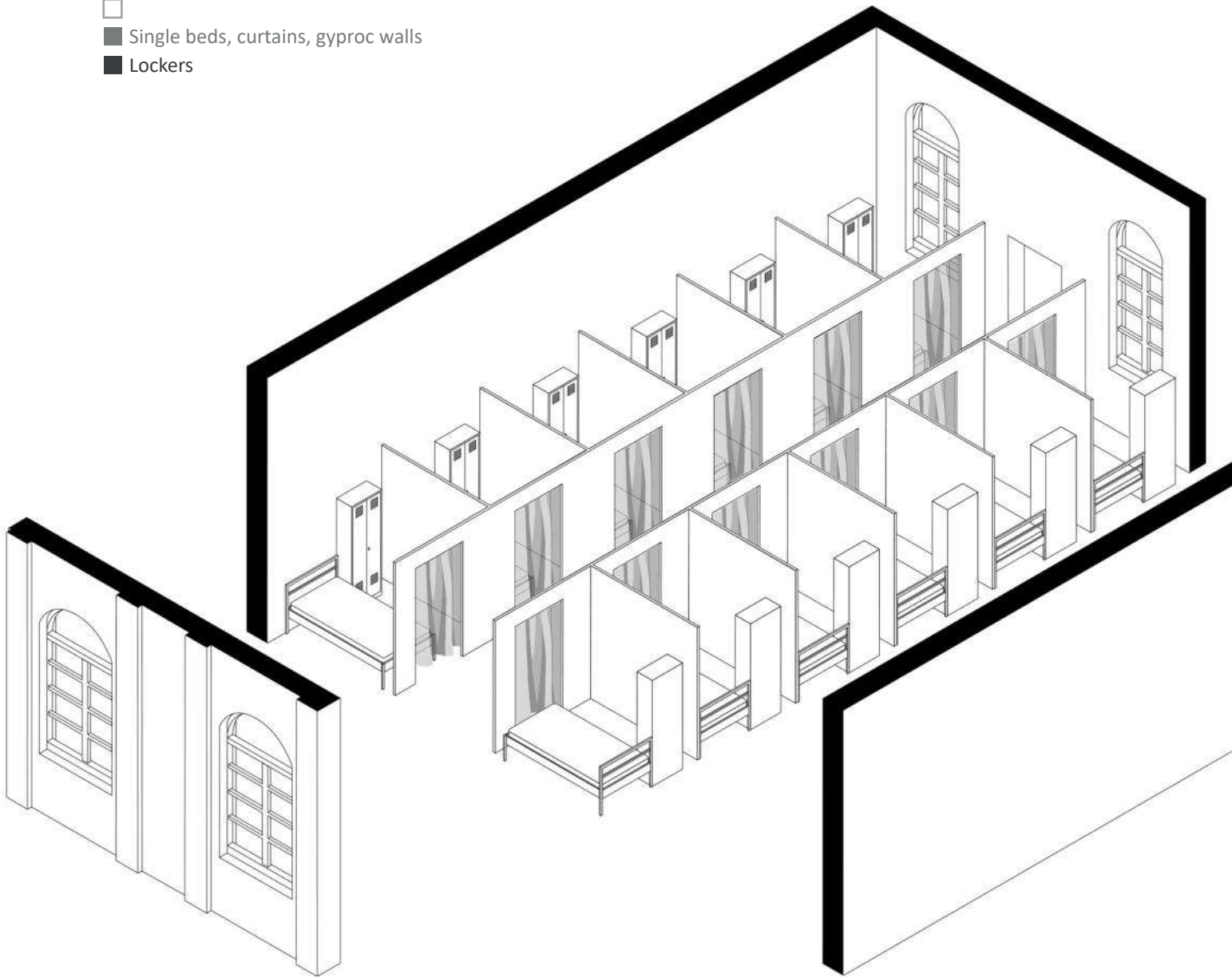


## KLEIN KASTEELTJE



■ Single beds, curtains, gyproc walls

■ Lockers



## OUDERGEM



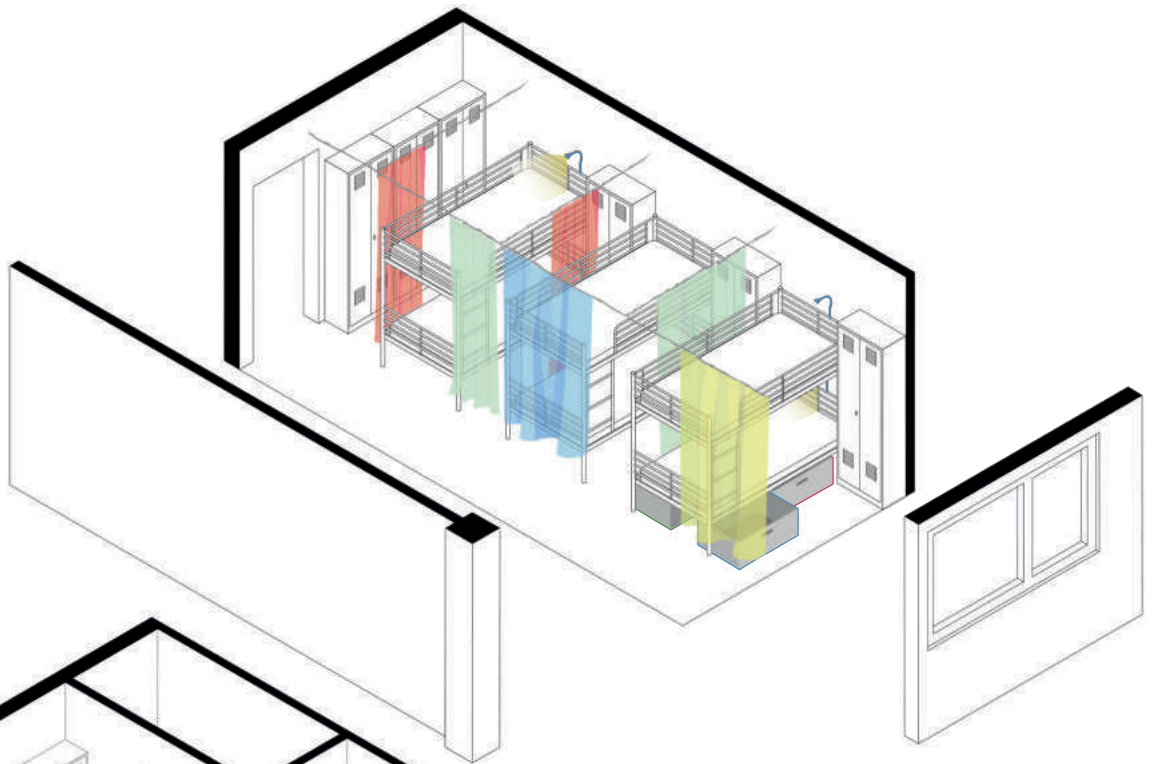
■ Curtains, bedside light

■ Lockers, hanging storage, clothes hangers

### ZAVENTEM



- Curtains, bedside light
- Lockers, bed drawers



### JETTE

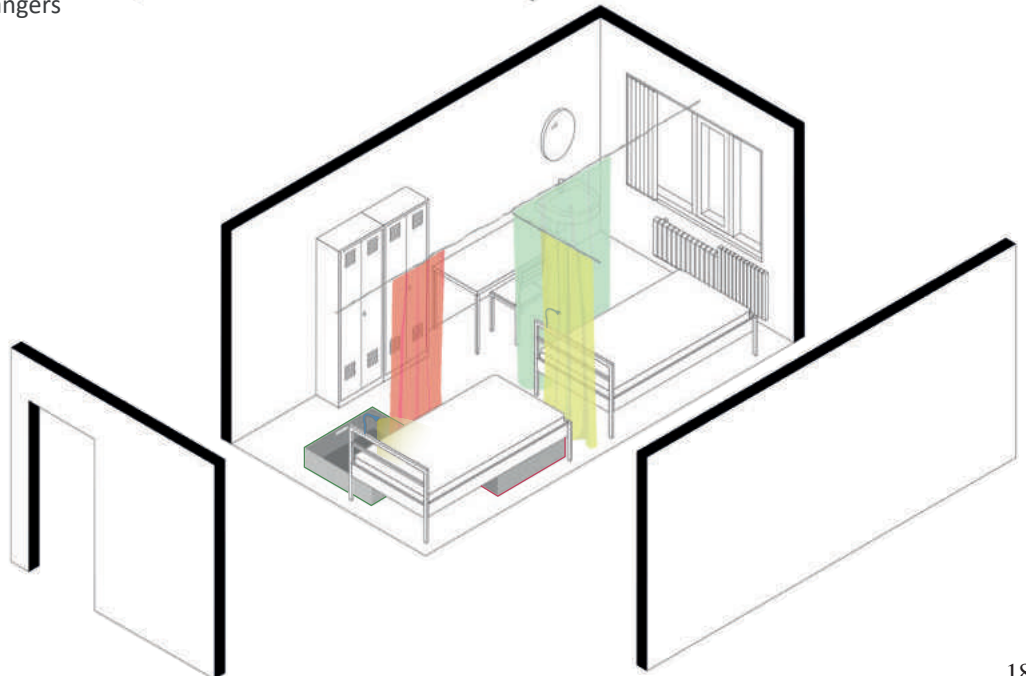


- Curtains, bedside light
- Lockers, hanging storage, clothes hangers

### UKKEL



- Single beds, curtains, bedside light
- Lockers, bed drawers



## B. COLLECTIVENESS - LESSONS FROM EUROPE

Before examining the possibilities of collectiveness in the context of the Brussels reception centres, lessons are drawn from inspiring projects on inclusion across Europe. One of the sources consulted for this purpose was the Designing Inclusion handbook “Civil Society Organisations in Action: Re-shaping urban planning and design through solidarity in Europe” (d’Auria et al., 2018).

SOFT ARCHITECTURE



Fig. 1 The Desinc-Live Workshop on the construction site in Marzahn (Durrer, n.d.).

### S27 Stadtwerk mrzn, Berlin

is an open and experimental construction site at the Otto-Rosenberg-Platz in Berlin-Marzahn. S27, an NGO that organises projects in collaboration with artists and young people, set up this project on a site in the periphery to which many refugees have been exiled. Workshops are organised regularly, focusing on creativity, exchange and learning the German language together (S27, n.d.). This was also the site of the first Desinc-Live Workshop in the summer of 2021.

SOFT ARCHITECTURE

### Makers’ Hub, Oslo

is an architectural collective that aims to address the poor living standards in the reception centres in Norway. Their focus is improving the quality of life of vulnerable groups. Through participation, they encourage asylum seekers to self-build “as a way to empower them and give them a sense of dignity” (d’Auria, 2018). Together, they try to develop inclusive design solutions.



Fig. 2 The “K1-klubben” project involving the design of a system of modular benches (Makershub Oslo, n.d.).

THE KITCHEN



Fig. 3 The Refugio Café in Berlin (Berlin City Mission, n.d.).

### Sharehaus Refugio, Berlin

is a project of Berliner Stadtmission where Berliners live, work and share. Community and cohesion are the fundamentals of the social project where half of the inhabitants have a migration background. All the residents have to contribute to the community with their personal skills. On the ground floor is the Refugio Café that is run by the inhabitants. Furthermore, the inhabitants eat together every day to reinforce the communal relations (Rohde, 2018).

### Kitchen on the Run, Europe

is the mobile version of Über den tellerand e.V., an NGO that is committed to cooking with refugees and other residents, trying to spread the idea of an open and diverse society. For a few weeks, they settle in a location where contact between refugees and other locals is difficult. They consider personal contact as the key for overcoming prejudices in our society and thus contributing to intercultural coexistence in Europe (Kitchen on the Run, n.d.).



Fig. 4 Kitchen on the run during the Germany Tour in 2017 (Kitchen on the run, n.d.).



Fig. 5 The Maidan Tent serving as a covered public square at the Ritsona refugee camp (Maidan Tent, 2017).

### Maidan Tent, Ritsona

is a project that was established with the objective of improving the quality of life in refugee camps. They try to go beyond the basic needs for survival by creating “common grounds, places for social interaction and where daily activities can be shared” (Maidan Tent, 2017). They designed the “Maidan Tent” as a multifunctional, covered public space. The first realisation of this design took place in the Ritsona refugee camp in Greece.

### Yurts Atelier RITA, Ivry-sur-Seine

is a project for a temporal Emergency Shelter for Migrants and Travelers in France. The arrangement of the shelter resembles a village, with a central space designed with six multifunctional yurts. The space in between acts as a kind of public space that allows people to interact and spend time together. “From the Greek Agora to the Church square, people have always been organizing their life around this permanent transition from public to private spaces” (Ghisleni, 2021).



Fig. 6 The central space with the yurts acts as a public space for social interaction (Bourreau, n.d.)

### C. THREE PRINCIPLES OF COLLECTIVENESS

The limited offer of collective spaces in the Brussels reception centres gives rise to the question of which typologies of collectiveness have the potential to effect a change on the scale of the reception centre. The issue is how the spatial framework for collectiveness can contribute to life and cohabitation in the centres. “Soft architecture”, “the kitchen” and “the urban playground” are proposed as catalysts for change. Each of these principles will be presented using one of the five case studies in Brussels.

#### 1. SOFT ARCHITECTURE

The first principle of collectiveness that is suggested is “soft architecture”. This typology represents a kind of construction process where residents can express their creativity and be actively engaged through the appropriation of the reception centre. This active participation is, on the one hand, a way to make the long waiting during the asylum procedure more bearable. On the other hand, they can contribute to the improvement of the reception centre by designing it themselves while interacting with their fellow residents. This could strengthen their sense of belonging. Like Abel who paints the wide corridors in Zaventem “I want to make it feel like my home as much as possible” (Abel, personal communication, February 25, 2022). This useful way of spending time is particularly interesting for those residents who do not yet have an Orange

and therefore cannot work or receive an education. But also children can participate in tinkering and painting their own works of art. At S27 in Berlin, for example, go-carts were built so that the children also had a project to work on. In this way, the parents are also somewhat relieved.

The project could be supported by an NGO, whereby the residents could collaborate with artists or craftsmen to create solutions that would benefit the reception centre. Consider the exercise on privacy, for which space-efficient storage systems can be designed and built. Or the curtains that can be manufactured during a sewing workshop. Moreover, such workshops and participatory processes stimulate language learning.

Zaventem is one example of a reception centre where such a hub could be created. The large car park is a suitable site for such a project, and due to the centre’s isolated location in the industrial area, there would be little nuisance for neighbours. In addition to the storage systems and curtains for the visual aspect of privacy in the bedrooms, the outdoor space could also be one of the projects to tackle. By creating canopies or hammocks between the trees and buildings or by erecting pavilions, new uses could take place. In this way, a more humane reception centre can be created step by step, by and for this mixed target group.

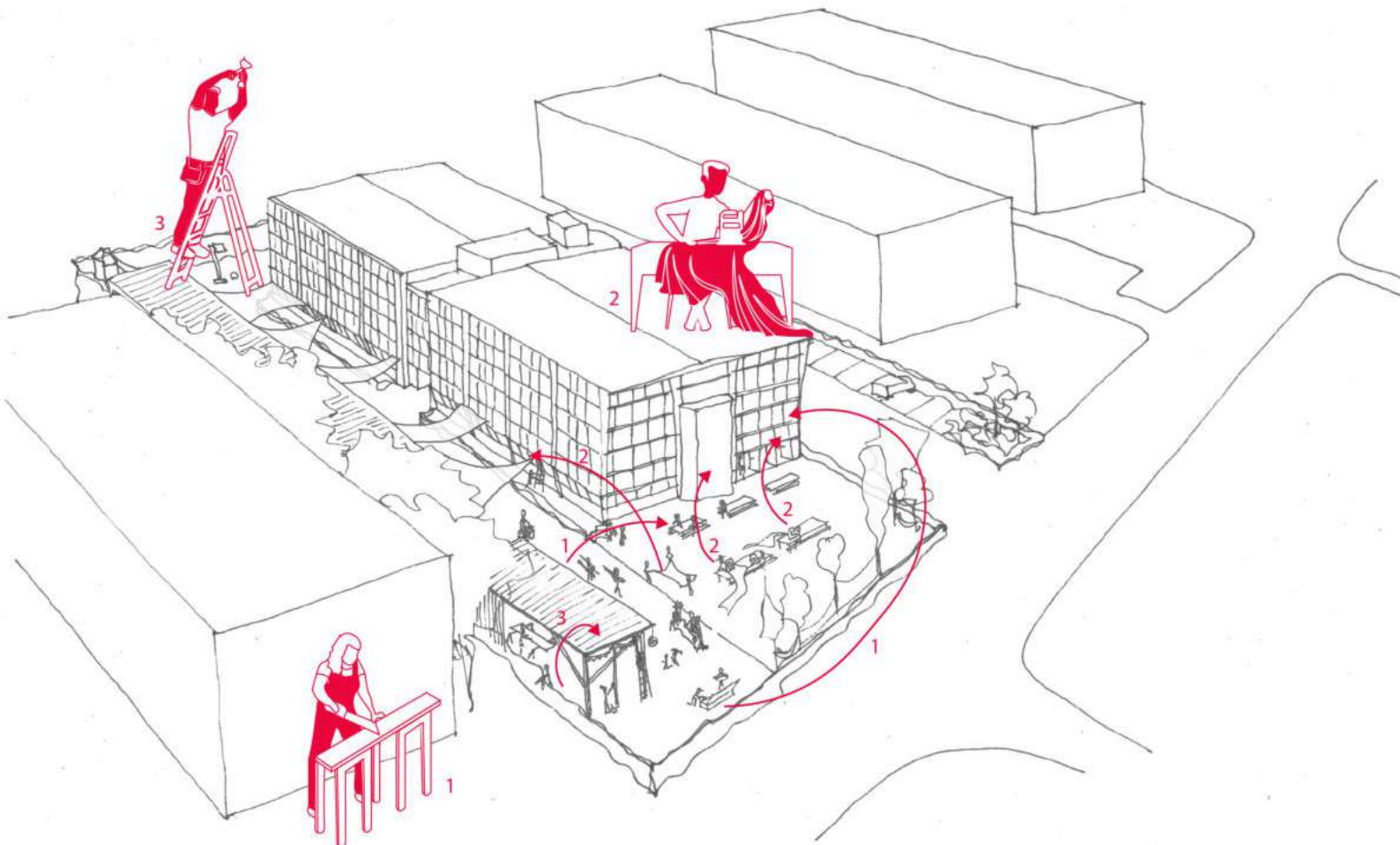
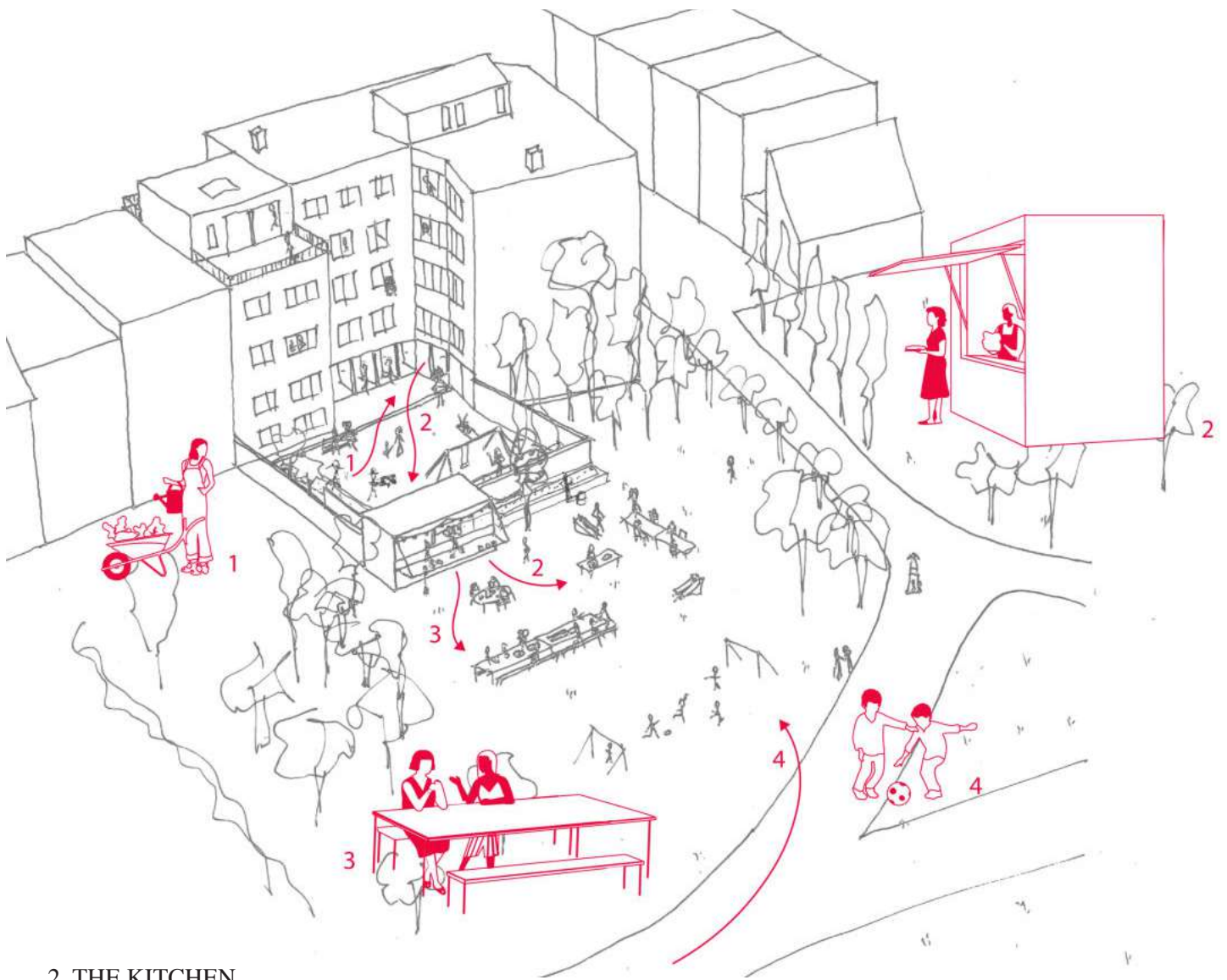




Fig. 7 Existing situation outside at the Zaventem reception centre.



Fig. 8 Concept image for "soft architecture" in the Zaventem reception centre.



## 2. THE KITCHEN

Every reception centre in this study is equipped with a refectory and a kitchen. However, the latter is designed to prepare the food provided by the catering company, which means that in some cases there is not even a cooker. The residents therefore have little or no opportunity to cook for themselves, which was repeatedly mentioned as a shortcoming. It is one of the basics of domesticity that is eliminated in the reception centres. In some centres, a weekly opportunity for cooking is organised using a reservation system. However, this is clearly not enough to meet the needs of the large number of residents. “Cuisiner me manque vraiment” (Had-ya, personal communication, February 25, 2022).

Consequently, “the kitchen” is proposed as the second principle of collectiveness. More than converting the kitchen with a sufficient number of cookers, a shift in social management is required. The whole food system could be re-arranged in order to reshape the routines in the reception centres. For example, the catering company could continue to provide breakfast and lunch, while the hot meals in the evening would be prepared by a certain number of residents each day. A permanent cooking team consisting of a number of committed residents could meet weekly to determine the menu and the week’s schedule. This cooking team could be supported by the staff.

This could even be taken a step further at the weekends, for example, in the form of a café that is run by the centre’s residents like the Refugio Café in Berlin. In this way, “the kitchen” not only provides the basis for domesticity, but also a spatial framework for social interaction among residents on the one hand and between residents and neighbourhood residents on the other hand. Food has the potential to bring people together, which the inspiring “Kitchen on the Run” project makes full use of. Moreover, it could be an interesting idea to use the food leftovers from the food shops in the 15-Minute City of the reception centre for the cooking and thus reduce food waste. But also home grown products could be used in “the kitchen”.

The location of the women’s reception centre in Jette seems well suited to this type of function. The women’s kitchen and canteen are located at the garden level, which at the back connects to the Koning Boudewijnpark. This could be an opportunity to install an external café unit, such as a container, at the boundary of the garden. This would leave sufficient outdoor space where the residents of the centre can relax while the park can be used as a terrace for the café. “The kitchen” can stimulate interaction with the neighbourhood, while the Koning Boudewijnpark is also being revived.





### 3. THE URBAN PLAYGROUND

Finally, the third type of collectiveness is dedicated to the creation of gathering spaces in the reception centres. The repeated lack of such places in the centres leads to an increased pressure on the bedrooms. As learned during the interviews, there are residents who stay in the bedroom 24/7. There is a need for opportunities to escape within, or on the site of, the centre itself. The main purpose of “the urban playground” is to relieve the pressure on cohabitation in the centres and to stimulate social interaction.

“The urban playground” represents a place or set of places where social interaction is stimulated, as a kind of public space within the centre. It brings, in a way, the characteristics of the macro and meso city down to the micro scale. This is particularly interesting for the reception centres that are isolated far from social infrastructures, but also for the centres of the first phase. In this phase, the inhabitants are still often in a condition where they do not independently visit distant infrastructures. “Velen bevinden zich nog in een post-traumatische fase. Ze blijven liever op hun kamer.” (M. Meirlaen, personal communication, December 21, 2021).

The illustration of this concept is applied to Klein Kasteeltje. The arrival centre only offers few collective

spaces. Moreover, most of them are only accessible during certain hours of the day or when activities are organised. The only common spaces available to residents throughout the entire day are the courtyards. However, these are dominated by parked cars, a few tents, two islands with playgrounds and a large empty area where one feels watched by the people in the surrounding buildings. Nevertheless, the large area that the courtyards occupy holds potential to do more.

Imagine that the courtyard is designed as an urban square where various activities can take place at the same time and a certain diversity of places is created within the space. Different architectural typologies could be implemented to allow for different uses. Connected to the refectory, for example, a covered terrace could be created. Furthermore, a typology like the “Maidan Tent” could be installed on the other side of the courtyard, to accommodate various activities or serve as a playground. Small pavilions could also be placed scattered around the square so that users are sheltered from the sun and rain, but especially from gazes from inside the buildings. All of this can be combined with individual, movable chairs such as the Paris garden chairs so that the square can be used flexibly. In short, “the urban playground” is the city in the centre, a place to both escape and gather.

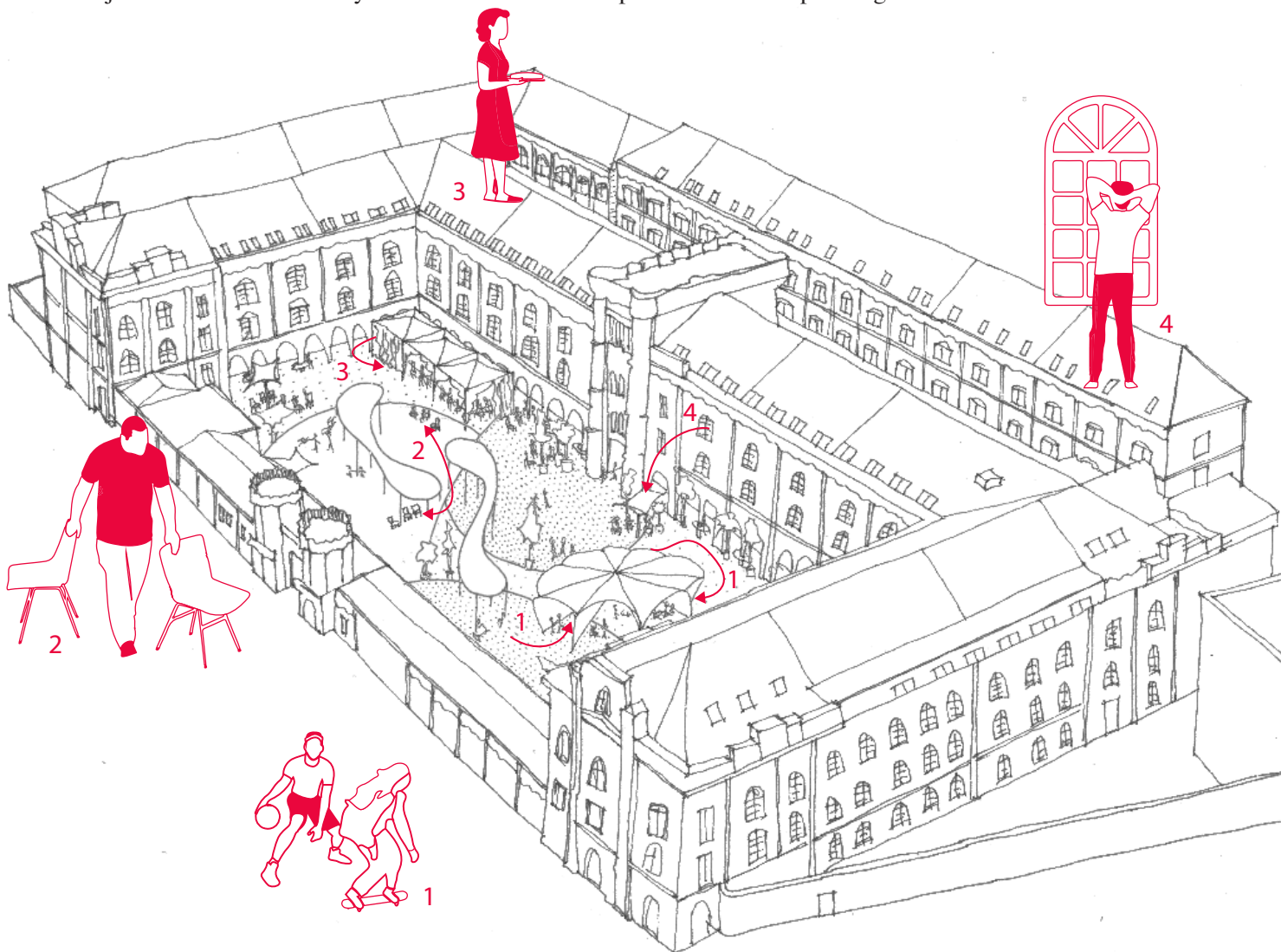




Fig. 11 Existing situation in the courtyard of Klein Kasteeltje (HeBlad, n.d.).

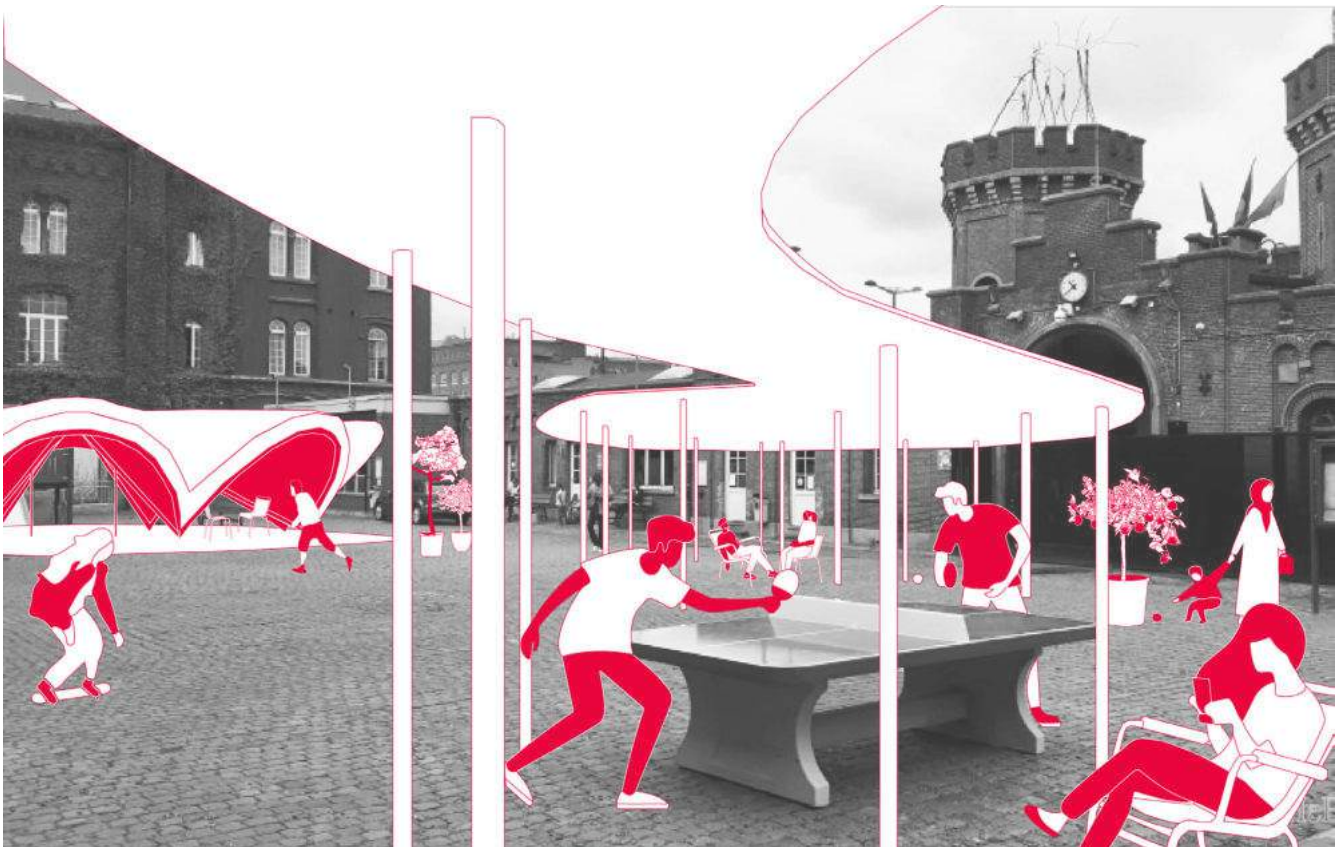


Fig. 12 Concept image for "the urban playground" in Klein Kasteeltje.

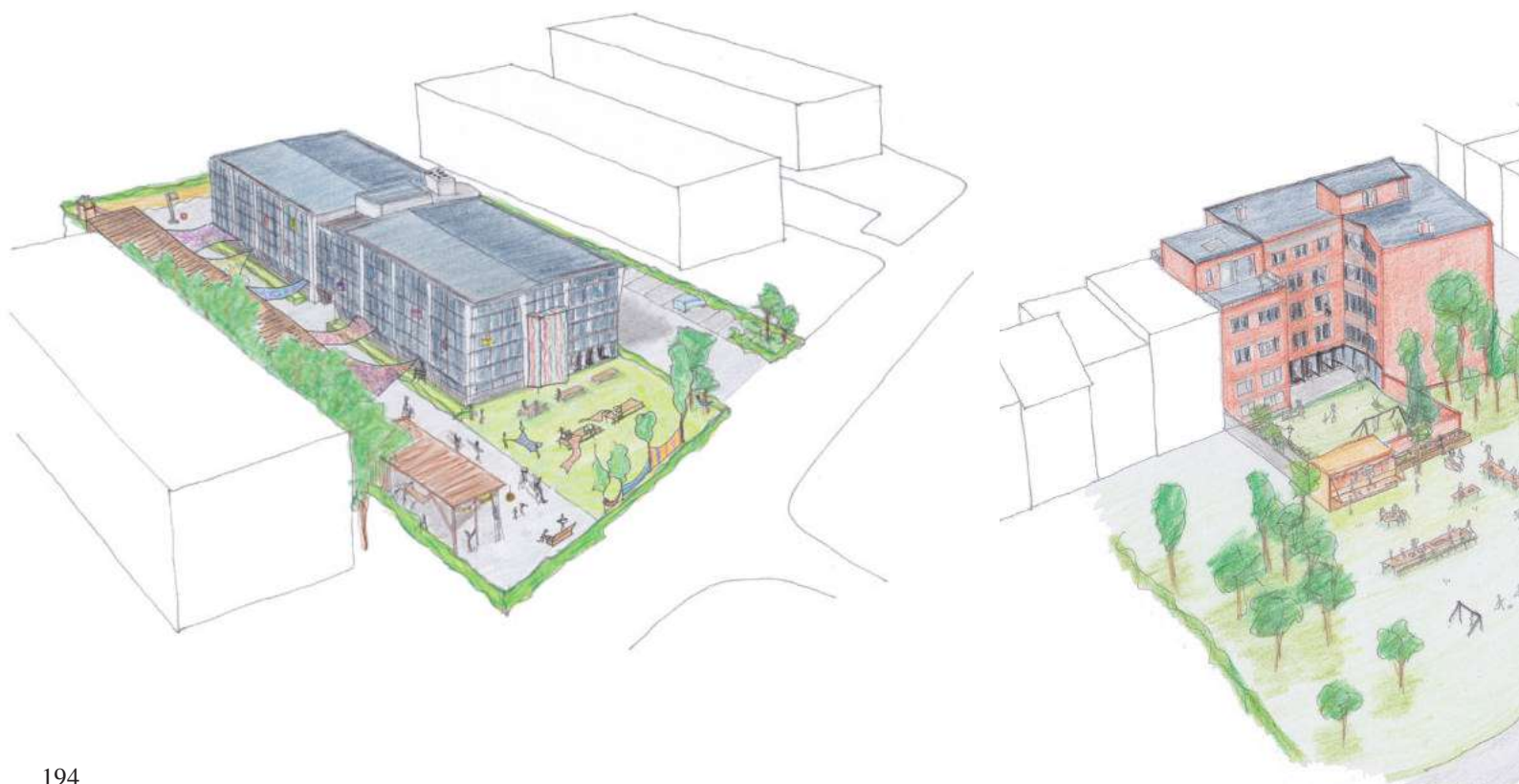
## CONCLUSION

In the context of successive migratory waves – seemingly a permanent asylum crisis – it is the asylum seekers who are affected by the pressure on the reception system. It is mostly the limited space and associated poor privacy conditions that result in an inadequate response to the wants and needs of its residents. These limitations reflect insufficient investments, which otherwise could have mitigated some of the problems within the centres. In the background lurks a policy that prevents the reception network from being “too comfortable” out of fear of a “pull”-effect (Luypaert, 2021). The three principles of the reception system, ‘Bed, Bath, Bread’, seem to set the limits to the investments. Such policies ignore the ethical implications to the well-being of one of the most vulnerable groups in society.

At the same time it must be recognised that many asylum seekers are indeed very happy to encounter ‘Bed, Bath, Bread’ upon arrival at Klein Kasteeltje or an OOC (Phase 1), after their long and often strenuous or traumatic journey (Phase 0). Subsequently, the reception centres, too, are consistent in ensuring these basic provisions during the course of asylum procedure (Phase 2). These facts definitely deserve appraisal. The various centres, however, differ strongly in terms of providing comfort. This holds for both the macro scale – relevant for social infrastructures and mobility – and for the micro scale. Whereas Klein Kasteeltje manages to squeeze twelve beds and lockers tightly into a room, all rooms at the Jette centre are equipped with tables, chairs and sanitary basics. Jette, in turn, makes six strangers live together in a single room, whereas

residents in the Ukkel centre share their room with just one other person. Ukkel, however, has no outdoor spaces, while Oudergem offers green space and an outdoor terrace. Residents in the Oudergem centre have to do without cooking facilities, while those at Zaventem can do their own cooking twice per week. In spite of all the limitations of ‘the system’, residents unequivocally praised the great efforts by staff in the respective centres to make their stay comfortable. One of the interviewees literally stated that “this is the best part of the centre”. Staff consistently aim to arrange for a pleasant stay for residents in their centre, with the help of partners in their network (meso scale analysis).

The centres appear inadequate in their design to facilitate long-term stay. We have aimed to spin the lived experiences of asylum seekers into a thread that runs through the case studies and reveals the shortcomings of the reception network. The basics of domesticity seem to be ignored, the infrastructure to maintain some degree of autonomy is lacking, and the individual’s right to privacy remains unfulfilled in many cases. Within the spatial framework that the centres represent, residents live to the centres’ rhythms, trying to create and maintain some kind of personal routine. However, the centres house an incredible diversity of individuals, whose cultures, languages, desires, needs, concerns and aspirations differ widely. As a result, residents experience and use their built environment in different ways, which culminates in an intense cohabitation that affects the well-being of the residents. In the absence of opportunities to escape within the centre, the city offers a refuge during their life in limbo.

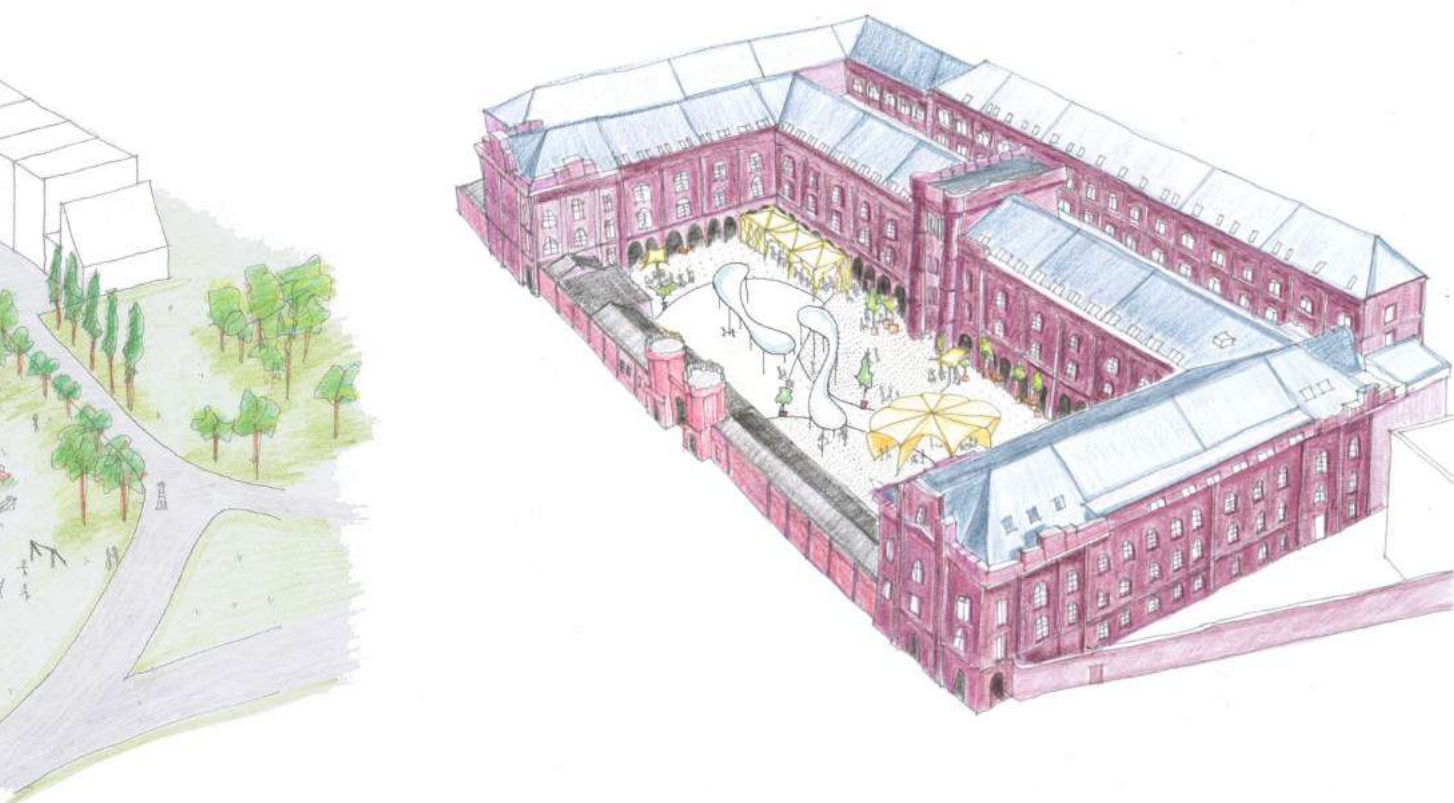


The macro-analyses of the various Brussels reception centres revealed ample availability of social infrastructures within the respective 15-Minute City circles. These facilities were found to be frequently used by the residents, according to the meso-scale analyses. In this way, and at least to some extent, the city complements the centres in providing elements that are hard to realize within the centres themselves. While the centre provides the bed, bath, bread basics, the city offers green parks to unwind, space for social gatherings and collectiveness, facilities for recreation, education and employment; and a kind of anonymity that for a while makes the resident's status irrelevant. In order to fully exploit such potential duality and complementarity between reception centres and the city, the 'inclusive city' and all its facilities must be accessible for everyone equally. This means that eventual barriers – e.g., in terms of mobility, affordability, language, etc. – should be eliminated. Establishing balanced interactions and complementarity between reception centres on the one hand, and the wider built environment on the other, emerges as a challenge for urban designers.

Displacement has shaped and will continue to shape our cities. The reception of asylum seekers is an urban challenge that requires both political will and interdisciplinary solutions. Rather than temporary accommodation, we must design fully-fledged accommodation that is resilient to the fluctuating influx of asylum seekers. In other words: a built environment that offers room for domesticity, autonomy and privacy, and goes beyond the minimum requirements that just enable people to live there. Within the existing spatial

framework of the centres, the final chapter of the thesis explored what concepts could catalyse a change in (life in) the reception centres. As a kind of "degree zero" improvement, three principles were proposed to suggest that the spatial framework for "collectiveness" can activate residents and stimulate social interaction, and thus contribute to life and cohabitation in the centres. As such, this thesis seeks to contribute to a better understanding of life in the reception system and trigger conversations about future design and planning decisions.

The "maximum degree" of improvement, however, would mean that such segregated places would not exist. Civil status should not be an impediment to access to society and the city. "Space plays a pivotal role in facilitating or hindering inclusion" (De Carli & Caistor-Arendar, 2021). An inclusive city is a city accessible to all, a city that can accommodate diversity, stimulate "agency", and also enables newcomers to develop a sense of belonging. It is a city with a sufficiently open spatial framework to allow different lifestyles to coexist, rather than separating them, making the city into a symbol of social recognition. We believe that tremendous improvements in the catering for asylum seekers' needs may lie ahead, provided inspiration for design and – of course – a people's willingness to invest.



## Endnote Lessons From Brussels

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### Figures

- Fig. 1.: Durrer L. (n.d.). The Desinc-Live Workshop on the construction site in Marzahn [Photograph]. Stadtwerk mrzn. <https://www.s27.de/portfolio/stadtwerk-mrzn/>
- Fig. 2.: Makershub Oslo. (n.d.). The “K1-klubben” project involving the design of a system of modular benches [Photograph]. <https://www.makershuboslo.com/prosjekter/k1-klubben?itemId=u9fqsjei5hrz4jhescbo3miwqg3u5g>
- Fig. 3.: Berlin City Mission. (n.d.). The Refugio Café in Berlin [Photograph]. <https://refugio.berlin/refugio-cafe/galerie>
- Fig. 4.: Kitchen on the run. (n.d.). Kitchen on the run during the Germany Tour in 2017. <https://kitchenontherun.org/en/tour-2017/>
- Fig. 5.: Maidan Tent. (2017). The Maidan Tent serving as a covered public square at the Ritsona refugee camp [Photograph]. [https://www.maidantent.org/?fbclid=IwAR0bPzAKxkRACT5krm\\_UdiLjgc88WCSrQ9jUK6BbhZGSpmDT\\_xMgLDVOQ](https://www.maidantent.org/?fbclid=IwAR0bPzAKxkRACT5krm_UdiLjgc88WCSrQ9jUK6BbhZGSpmDT_xMgLDVOQ)
- Fig. 6.: Bourreau D. (n.d.). The central space with the yurts acts as a public space for social interaction. <https://www.archdaily.com/901650/shelter-for-migrants-and-travelers-atelier-rita/5b91fe47f197cc30e000058d-shelter-for-migrants-and-travelers-atelier-rita-photo>
- Fig. 7.: Own picture. (2021, November 3). Existing situation outside at the Zaventem reception centre [Photograph].
- Fig. 8.: Own image. (2022, June 1). Concept image for “soft architecture” in the Zaventem reception centre [Drawing].
- Fig. 9.: Own picture. (2021, November 2). Existing situation in the garden of the women’s reception centre in Jette [Photograph].
- Fig. 10.: Own image. (2022, May 30). Concept image for “the kitchen” in the Jette reception centre [Drawing].
- Fig. 11.: N.N. (n.d.). Existing situation in the courtyard of Klein Kasteeltje [Photograph]. HeBlad. <https://www.heblad.be/fr/751/fedasil-centre-petit-chateau/25394>
- Fig. 12.: Own image. (2022, June 3). Concept image for “the urban playground” in Klein Kasteeltje [Drawing].



