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The Urban Lab of Europe !

# The CURANT project Journal N° 3

*Project led by the city of Antwerp*



**INTEGRATION OF  
MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES**



## The CURANT project

The CURANT project seeks to provide integrated services for unaccompanied young refugees once they reach adulthood and are no longer entitled to benefit from social protection as an unaccompanied minor. It will combine co-housing and social integration schemes with volunteer buddies (young local residents aged 20-30 years old) for one to one integration and circular integrated individual trajectories. A total of 75 co-housing units will be set up through purchase, renovation and private renting. In these units a minimum of 75 and a maximum of 135 unaccompanied young refugees cohabit with Flemish buddies for at least 1 year. The buddy helps the refugee with different aspects.

The refugees are intensively guided during the whole project, on different levels such as through a social network and integration, education, independent living, language learning, leisure time, psychological counselling and professional activation. During the project, the University of Antwerp measures the impact of the cohousing and intensive support on the integration of the young refugees.

The project aims to help the target group with education, training and work, creating a network of supportive relations and dealing with (war) trauma. The refugees transcend their status as welfare beneficiaries and are able to create a good future in Antwerp. In turn, their success stories set an example for their peers as they personify an effective integration. Positively integrating young refugees to society contributes to a more harmonious urban community and an increased public safety.

The buddy's will sharpen their intercultural qualities and take up an exemplary role as pioneers of a welcoming society. In the meanwhile, both groups benefit from living in affordable housing. The main partners will have actively acquired expertise on working with the target group. Thus they are able to develop cooperative working methods, allowing regular future services to be tuned.

**Partnership:**

- Stad Antwerpen
- Solentra (Solidarity and Trauma) - unit of the psychiatric division of UZ Brussel
- JES vzw - 'urban lab' for children and youngsters in Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels
- Vormingplus - NGO
- Atlas integratie & inburgering Antwerpen - NGO
- University of Antwerpen

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# 1. Executive Summary

As across Europe a wave of political discontent for the massive challenge of migration gains popularity, it seems appropriate to re-connect to the sense of purpose of the CURANT project in Antwerp and what it can represent in terms of policy innovation in the larger context of policy discussion on integration at the European level.

The presence of humanitarian migrants requires European countries to look beyond the immigration and reception policies per se. The issue of integration of refugees is clearly back on the agenda, in terms of labour market integration, education, housing, healthcare, contact with the society and cultural orientations (including attitudes towards refugees).

In the recognition that cities play a central role in the integration challenge, some of them have started to experiment local solutions that have a targeted and integrated approach, and that might spark some intuitions on how to improve not just local policies across the continent, but also gain an influence on the other levels of policy making.

Even though in this kind of interventions the context is a key factor in the success of the

intervention, there is a chance to extract transversal principles that can be adopted in other contexts. It is the role of programmes such as UIA not just to promote and fund, but to disseminate the results of those innovations, creating more opportunities for joint dialogue, reflection and transfer between cities.

As CURANT enters its last year, it is indeed of the foremost importance to start thinking about the future after the projects ends, with implications for both sustainability and dissemination. The Journal proposes the adoption of a new social innovation model, whose characteristics is to take into account the nuances of social innovation, which represents a complex phenomenon incorporating a range of individual, organizational and inter-organizational activities aimed at addressing social needs. CURANT could try and apply this social innovation model when thinking and acting upon the future after the project ends, and to start working simultaneously on all the building blocks of social innovation with the intent to create a sustainable service and business model for the action moving forward.

The Journal provides an update as well on where the project stands in its implementation.

## 2. Introduction

As across Europe a wave of political discontent for the massive challenge of migration gains popularity, it seems appropriate to re-connect to the sense of purpose of the CURANT project in Antwerp and what it can represent in terms of policy innovation in the larger context of policy discussion on integration at the European level. It is evident that there must be a coordination between the EU, national, regional and local policies and interventions, but at the same time it is cities who are experimenting the most, displaying a variety of interesting approaches to solve the challenge and increasing collaboration among them to learn from each other.

As CURANT enters its last year, it is indeed of the foremost importance to start thinking about the future after the projects ends, with implications for both sustainability and dissemination. Nonwithstanding some inevitable implementation

challenges, the project has maintained its original trajectory and it is delivering on the promises made. Now the time calls for a reflection on what kind of legacy might the team of CURANT want to leave behind, and how useful that will be for policy design in the future, and what conditions should be in place for the continuation of the model beyond the support of EU funds, and how that can become a replicable model for other interventions on different categories of beneficiaries.

Therefore, this Journal N.3 of the CURANT project focuses mainly on the reflection described above, and attempts to provide both a useful description of the EU local integration policy landscape and how CURANT can contribute to that, and also some key aspects to consider when thinking about the project scaling and sustainability.

## 3. Project update

### 3.1 Amazing

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, I attended the official celebration for the new modular housing units built by the project, hosting duos since the beginning of October. The new construction, built on a patch of land owned by the municipality in Merksem, a district in the north part of the city, is sustainable and innovative in many ways. First of all, it is built in a way which makes it easier to disassemble and reassemble rapidly and affordably if the city decided to move the

construction elsewhere. This aspect made it also very fast to build. Secondly, it respects the highest standards of environmental sustainability. Thirdly, it hosts some communal spaces, a TV room, a big kitchen, a co-working space and a washing room, to encourage socialisation and community building among its inhabitants. Last but not least, it is surrounded by a beautiful garden with lots of outside space to enjoy during sunny days.





But the amazing thing that day was not the building, but the celebration: bright red tents in the garden to accommodate the guests, lights and candles everywhere, bonfire to protect from cold, live music played by a fantastic band whose elements are a mix of refugees and cultural mediators, a graffiti workshop for the younger ones, and of course fries for everyone. Around 100 people attended the event, many from the neighbourhood. The atmosphere was great,

## 3.2 Project status

In the last year, 39 refugees were cohabitating for the first time in CURANT, while 9 newcomers had an extension of their stay as they weren't self-reliant yet and were motivated to stay longer. 15 Refugees left the project during this period, of which 1 evaluated as negative as he didn't participate in the trainings. The other ones

everybody seemed genuinely happy for the new community of youngsters joining the area, and the playfulness of the evening hinted at the fact that, at least for one night, integration is not an impossible challenge. The merit of all of it goes to the CURANT team, as they really made an extra effort in organising the celebration, and the attention to details was the confirmation that their commitment and passion for what they do makes all the difference.

were evaluated as positive, personal capital was strengthened and they were ready to live on their own. From those, 9 left the project after 1 year, 2 after an extension of 1 to 4 months and 3 left between 5.5 and 9 months.

Each refugee leaving the project was guided towards other services outside CURANT. In



total 64 refugees lived together or are still living together during year 2 of CURANT and their trajectories were managed. This means that in total 64 refugees were in a trajectory in the period and their customer files were managed. Close follow up by the case manager was needed with all the refugees.

Social assistants visit every refugee at least once every two weeks and besides practical help (e.g. applying for social housing, making bank transfers), he/she also gives emotional support. Every 4 months the assistant evaluates the youngster against a self-reliance matrix that was developed for the project. Self-reflection by the refugee is highly important and all results are discussed with the refugee.

Almost all refugees followed the obligated trainings, some of the available tailor made trainings and individual/group trauma relief sessions in order to strengthen them in different life aspects. The project adapted these customized trainings to the needs of the youngsters. For example, CURANT did notice that the focus on housing search and how to live independent must play a more extended role.

In the last year, also 39 New buddies received coaching support. Each new candidate follows at least two training sessions before moving into a house. After the movement, each buddy gets invited for three coaching interviews: one during a house visit in the first month, one in the fourth month before the end of the contract and one in the last month of the cohousing experience. These interviews are highly important as the challenges and experiences mentioned in these interviews are used as input for monthly intervision sessions. These are moments for buddies' collective reflection on issues/needs. Solutions are explored and participants inspire each other by sharing and analysing their experiences with

regard to their house-mates and their integration. These findings are then reformulated in a group-specific manual/ manifesto of tips and tricks.

Besides the regular coaching interviews, the partner in charge Vormingplus was asked for extra interviews to give advice in specific cases: in total 57 were held during year 2 of CURANT. Every month Vormingplus organises two intervision sessions so that buddies can choose which one matches their agenda. The sessions try to alternate a collective reflection part with a more educational one.

In the second year of the project, 46 Newcomers were screened and advised towards matching with buddies. Some of the newcomers were evaluated as negative and couldn't participate in CURANT. 65% Of the newcomers had individual therapy with two-weekly frequency. 1 group-therapy session has been organized. Although the high number of initial participants, there was an important drop-out and only 2 refugees completed the session. After questioning the youngsters, the reason seemed partly connected to having the sessions managed in French with the use of a translator.

At the time of writing, local political elections have slightly changed the equilibrium in Antwerp, and negotiations between parties for the establishment of the city government which will take power in January are taking place. Nobody can yet tell what the impact on the project will be, and to what extent.

With the addition of the new modular housing units, the project has managed to secure 63 housing units in total. The project partnership works well and all partners are performing their tasks as planned. Since the beginning of the project, 19 refugees left the project, of which only 5 for problems, as their trajectory was too

short or they experienced some cohabitating problems. We have already touched in previous journals about the small but important difficulties of living together. Lots of youngsters (buddies and refugees) do not clean the mutual spaces for instance, do not know how to live alone, some experience difficulties in paying the rent regularly. For these reasons, much work that wasn't expected had to be done by the project team in supporting the duos.

In 3 cases so far, family reunification forced refugees to leave the house and the project, but all of them underestimated how difficult it is to find a house in the market, and at the same time they do not know what renting a house entails from an administrative and financial point of view. According to Belgian law, when family comes over, for minors as in the case of CURANT, you do not need to prove you have a house or an income to be joined by family. The result is that when family comes over, the risk of ending up living in a street is high. This is why when refugees want to leave, they need help finding a house, and CURANT helps them with house search and with courses on how to live alone (on practicalities such as house deposit, rental contract, etc.). It is also proving difficult to transfer them to other social services, as intensity of support is much lower (they get less training, less time for personalised case management etc.). At present, many refugees enrolled in the project have asked for family reunification.

But one of the major realisations of the last few months has been that interaction and therefore integration doesn't just happen because of the

co-housing: the project team needs to invest time and energy in encouraging interactions, in organising social activities and in mediating between the duos to help them overcome some normal frictions of sharing a house with somebody else for the first time. Some examples of interventions by the project:

- in Klapdorp student house a cleaning session with spaghetti meal afterwards was organised by CURANT, as in that student house it is easy to just live the room and not to connect with the others, because everybody has their own studio with bathroom;
- in Brem 16 the organisation of a football tournament was encouraged. CURANT provided support but the idea and the whole organisation was up to the youngsters;
- the project mediator intervened in a dispute between a buddy and a refugee on housekeeping tasks, it took some time to explain both cultures and relative habits and agree on some mutual tasks; bringing both youngsters around the table and have follow up meetings with them helped overcome the challenges.

As CURANT planned to invest more time and energy on individual trajectories rather than social interactions, the project team acknowledged that it had underestimated in the project proposal phase the amount of resources that need to be devoted to community building. As well as in every experimentation, lessons learned will be useful for future developments.

# 4. CURANT in the context of EU policy innovation

## 4.1 A long term phenomenon

Amid disagreements about how to respond to the current asylum and migration crisis in the European Union (EU), there is one point of broad consensus: cities play a crucial role. This is the reason why it is important to promote, observe and measure the results of current experimentations in policy innovation in cities with regards to integration, and to have an opportunity like the Urban Innovative Action to disseminate and promote the exchange and cross-fertilisation of those practices.

Most European countries have faced increasing levels of asylum applications over the recent years. But this is not the first time that European countries face a challenge of refugee integration of some scale. One recent experience was in the early 1990s, when large numbers of migrants came from the former Yugoslav Republic. Refugee migration from destabilized areas in the Middle East has been a constant factor throughout the 1990s and the 2000s, especially from countries like Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. Iranian migration to Europe even dates back to the late 1970s and the 1980s, after the Islamic Revolution.

While the main reason for migration flows towards the EU is the presence of armed conflicts,

other causes such as economic insecurity, income inequality between countries of origin and countries of final destination, demography and climate change also need to be taken into account. Those are all causes which are not going to disappear in the short term.

Although the number of asylum applications appears to be decreasing since 2017, the prospects for return migration are still very slim. This means that many European countries will have to prepare for a relatively long, if not permanent, presence of significant numbers of humanitarian migrants.

This presence of humanitarian migrants requires European countries to look beyond the immigration and reception policies per se. The issue of integration of refugees is clearly back on the agenda, in terms of labour market integration, education, housing, healthcare, contact with the society and cultural orientations (including attitudes towards refugees). Although the numbers of asylum migrants present in different EU countries varies significantly, it has become clear that many countries will be faced with the challenge of incorporating relatively sizeable groups of refugee migrants.

## 4.2 Policy innovations at the city level

The economic integration of migrants is one of the priorities of the EU comprehensive approach to migration. It is crucial to empower migrants and refugees to develop the skills and to get

access to knowledge and support schemes that can enable them to build a solid livelihood, and also to create added value. This should include

the possibility of becoming entrepreneurs and thus contribute to further job creation.

Although it is still difficult to find one common European pattern in integration policies, it is clear that many European countries have been 'mainstreaming' their integration policies over the last decade or so. This means that they have largely abandoned their specific, group-targeted approaches to integration for a generic approach where 'mainstream' policies are supposed to cater to a diverse population and produce optimal integration outcomes.

In the recognition that cities play a central role in the integration challenge, some of them have started to experiment local solutions that have instead a targeted and integrated approach, and that might spark some intuitions on how

### **Athens – CURING THE LIMBO**

The programme develops around a circular "gift" system, addressing the twofold issue of both housing and inactivity: refugees receive affordable living spaces from the city's available housing stock and in return, they work for the

### **Bologna – S.A.L.U.S. W SPACE**

The proposed solution creates a reception centre for refugees which is also a neighbourhood centre, offering a pleasant and relaxing environment with educational gardens and

### **Coventry – MiFRIENDLY CITIES**

The project acts upon a variety of aspects simultaneously: it delivers training to employers for better engagement with refugees and migrants, it trains health champions to deliver

to improve not just local policies across the continent, but also gain an influence on the other levels of policy making. Considering the highly volatile political environment, it is local governments which are taking the lead in showing alternatives that can work.

The Urban Innovative Action programme (UIA) seeks to promote examples of policy innovation in cities on a range of policy challenges, including that of the integration of migrants and refugees. Rather than aiming for 'best practices' to be defined in terms of effective approaches to refugee integration, the programme aims to encourage the emergence of policy innovations and then try to analyse how they appear effective or not effective in specific settings. At present, there are seven active experimentations in cities across Europe funded by UIA, including CURANT:

public benefit, supporting the needs of the local community and participating in citizen-led activities that improve quality of life in Athenian neighbourhoods.

artistic workshops, but also supporting the refugees in their autonomy process and fostering micro-entrepreneurial development.

public health messages, it supports social enterprises to tackle challenges related to integration in the city.

## Fuenlabrada – MILMA PROJECT

The project promotes integration between cultures through a collaborative principle by which local inhabitants and migrants work together to increase their employability. Business

Challenges Labs are created with an active role of promoting the social economy through training and job creation in niche potential future economic sectors.

## Utrecht - U-RLP Utrecht Refugee Launch Pad

The project creates a combined learning and living environment for both refugees and the local community. It offers the neighbourhood a vibrant

centre where selected creative youngsters work with the asylum seekers to generate initiatives and services for the neighbourhood.

## Wien - CoRE Centre of Refugee Empowerment

The project aims at providing refugees with integrated support on three aspects: by making refugees equal partners instead of passive beneficiaries, by building a location that offers community spaces as well as service spaces, by testing new solutions and measuring their effectiveness.

of different actions. Central elements in the intervention design are a cohabitation scheme with volunteer flatmates for the young refugees, and the provision of integrated, individually tailored guidance and counselling focused on activation, education, independent living, language, leisure, social integration and psychological therapy.

And then of course the ***CURANT Project lead by the city of Antwerp***, providing a cluster

## 4.3 Lessons learned and the importance of dissemination

In all the above projects, labour market integration emerges as a key variable, as well as access to regular housing in areas with availability of socio-economic opportunities. In terms of housing, research suggests that it is very important that refugees move into a regular housing situation as soon as possible. This allows refugees to get in contact with the host society. However, what seems to be favourable for their integration is also that they interact with other members of the community. Research shows that the social capital that this generates can be very helpful for their integration and chances for making a first step on the labour market.

expertise that is currently fragmented across institutions and organisations, with the aim of developing a common, integrated approach, and to provide access to a continuum of services. This approach not just reinforces the action of any single institution or organisation, but creates a stable platform for collaboration which can be a key to sustainability.

However, the major rationale of the described interventions is to bring together relevant

Even though in this kind of interventions the context is a key factor in the success of the intervention, there is a chance to extract transversal principles that can be adopted in other contexts. Moreover, many implementation challenges can be considered transversal issues in the management of those type of complex, multi-actor, multi-dimensional projects, and therefore

lessons learned in those experimentations about what it takes to drive them and achieve concrete results should be transferred together with the operating principles.

Lessons such as how to navigate the changing political landscape or to communicate effectively on sensitive issues against the backdrop of a negative public opinion are important aspects when dealing with migration and integration challenges. Also, the case for high intensity of support and case management, personalised individual trajectories and co-housing schemes are all potential key success factors of interventions on the target group that are being demonstrated. Lastly, the need for flexible project management for continuous adjustment in the execution phase given the unpredictable individual trajectories is also a worthy lesson to be shared.

It is the role of programmes such as UIA not just to promote and fund, but to disseminate

the results of those innovations, creating more opportunities for joint dialogue, reflection and transfer between cities. But it is also up to the cities themselves to try to go beyond participation or organisation of dissemination events and come together to activate networks of cities with similar challenges and needs, finding ways and resources to keep those networks alive and useful to their members. Communication technologies certainly can be a help in lowering cost barriers, as well as international organisations whose role is to facilitate policy dialogue.

This also calls for a comparative analysis of the results achieved by those experimentations, as all planned for sophisticated monitoring and measuring methodologies. The diversity of approaches used cannot become an excuse not to attempt to compare their outputs and outcomes, and the difficulty of measuring long term impacts should be realistically taken into account in the evaluation.

## 5. The sustainability challenge

The project team is already raising strategic questions in relation to the scaling and sustainability of the project, such as: what happens to those involved in CURANT after the project ends? And what will happen to the future youngsters arriving in the country if the project does not work on its sustainability in order to provide them with support to their integration? For CURANT, sustainability is about making sure that those youngsters arriving in the country in the future will improve their chances of integration in the country and the community.

One of the major challenges any EU funded project faces is the one about the sustainability of the action in the future. For projects like CURANT, experimenting with innovation in policy, the sustainability is as much a matter of economic sustainability as of the effects on policy changes in the future. Even if the project has already built into the model some revenue streams, the sustainability challenge will require the development of a service and funding model that would ensure the continuation of the support programme CURANT offers, and perhaps its scaling. Indeed, this also passes for the demonstration that actions such as CURANT are effective in supporting full integration of refugees in society, therefore putting them in the condition to contribute to the economy of the communities they live in. It is indeed a matter of demonstrating how the investment in CURANT-like integration processes is convenient in the long run. In this respect, recent macro-economic simulation results suggest that *“although*

*the refugee integration, for example, by the providing language and professional training, is costly for the public budget, in the medium to long-run, the social, economic and fiscal benefits may significantly outweigh the short-run refugee integration costs. Depending on the integration policy scenario and policy financing method, the annual long-run GDP effect would be 0.2%–1.6% above the baseline growth<sup>1</sup>.”*

In order to respond to the sustainability challenge, the CURANT team has already built in the project activities some important work streams:

- the set up and management of a big stakeholders’ platform with interesting partners in the Flanders, to see what would need be done on a more structural level for the target group in order to provide continuity and sustainability to the action;
- the organisation of policy meetings with supra-local governments, involving the Flemish government (competent for integration of newcomers) and the Belgian federal government (competent for social integration and reception of asylum-seekers and refugees);
- the organisation of a workshop with the whole project team to discuss alternative strategies for the sustainability of the action.

As stated in paragraph 2.3, a key to success, and potentially to sustainability, is bringing together relevant expertise that is currently fragmented across institutions and organisations, with the aim

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<sup>1</sup> “Long-term social, economic and fiscal effects of immigration into the EU: The role of the integration policy”, The World Economy 2018, d’Artis Kancs and Lecca Patrizio

of developing a common, integrated approach, and to provide access to a continuum of services. This approach not just reinforces the action of any single institution or organisation, but creates a stable platform for collaboration. Studies show the key role that social partners (such as trade unions, employer's organisations, NGO's) can play in making refugee integration strategies work. The suggested approach has to go beyond mere coordination, but, as tested in CURANT, has to include the co-design of the intervention logic and activities. The notion of engaging a variety of stakeholders in co-designing, testing and scaling new solutions to societal challenges belongs to the emerging field of social innovation.

The European Union has devoted in the last years much effort on social innovation and on similar areas of interest (e.g. social and inclusive entrepreneurship, social enterprises, social economy, social cohesion), in the belief that in order to tackle complex societal challenges, innovation cannot solely come from top down approaches, but has to be co-created together with all those affected by, and working to solve, the very same challenges.

If the relevance of social innovation in contemporary society is widely acknowledged, the boundaries of definition have not yet been completely defined. Indeed, social innovation can be conceived as an umbrella concept that broadly include many features and in which different social, economic, cultural and administrative traditions play a role. One recent attempt to propose a model that would encompass different defining features of social innovation has been promoted by the organization I work for, the Giacomo Brodolini Foundation, for the ex-post evaluation of the ESF funds on social innovation in the EU to which I have contributed to<sup>2</sup>. In the proposed model, the aim is to take into account the nuances of social innovation, which represents a complex phenomenon incorporating a range of individual, organizational and inter-organizational activities aimed at addressing social needs.

The proposed model is represented in Figure 1, while the different dimensions of the model are illustrated in Table 1.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fondazionebrodolini.it/en/news-and-events/presentation-esf-contribution-social-innovation>



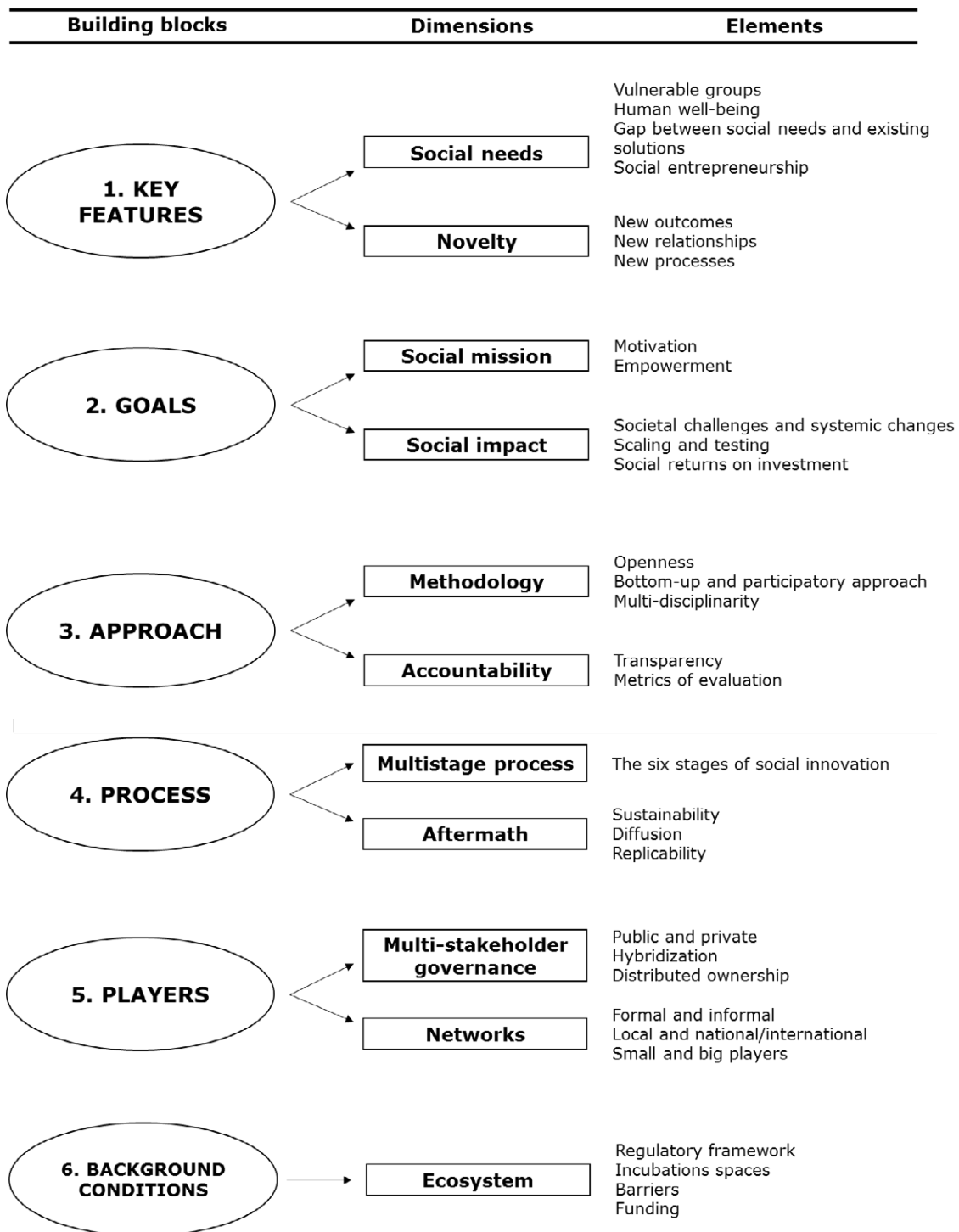


Figure 1 – Building blocks, dimensions and elements of the model

**Table 1 – Building blocks, dimensions and elements of the model**

Building blocks	Dimensions	Elements
Key features	Social Needs	<p>Vulnerable groups: One of the main issues of social innovation is to attenuate the risks faced by most vulnerable groups of society (e.g. youth, women, migrants, elderly people)</p> <p>Human well-being: Social innovation must also be aimed at improving human well-being by attenuating the health divide among the society and potential health inequities between different groups of people (e.g. by targeting poor housing conditions or low levels of education affecting specific groups of people)</p> <p>Gap between social needs and existing solutions: Social innovation aims at reducing the gap between social needs and existing services through the mobilization of individuals and civil society organizations</p> <p>Social entrepreneurship: Social innovation could be conceived as a definitory base for social entrepreneurship, social enterprises and social entrepreneurs</p>
	Novelty	<p>New outcomes: Social innovation refers to a wide array of new ideas and services that work in meeting social goals</p> <p>New relationships: Novelty regards both the development of new relationships with new partners and the implementation of new forms of cooperation and collaboration with already existing partners</p> <p>New processes: Novelty regards also the way of tackling unsolved social issues (e.g.. new organizational models) or to promote social activities (e.g. new communication activities)</p>

Building blocks	Dimensions	Elements
Goal	Social mission	<p>Motivation: Social innovation is critically driven by peculiar motivational drivers related to individual motives and social inspired goals</p> <p>Empowerment: Citizens are at the core of the mission of social innovation. This is why social innovation must rely on the engagement and commitment of different actors in order to achieve its social mission successfully</p>
	Social impact	<p>Societal challenges and systemic changes: Social innovation consists of finding an answer to societal challenges (e.g. to challenges set down by the new demographic trends) and to social changes (e.g. to the effects of economic and social crisis)</p> <p>Scaling and testing: One main goal of social innovation is to scale the scope or magnitude of the expected social impact. It is crucial to have as big an impact as possible on social problems. Another important goal regards testing the effective social impact of the new ideas and services</p> <p>Social returns on investment: Having a high social impact is particularly important for two main reasons: firstly, because donors and supporters are hungry to achieve high social returns on their investments; secondly, because social innovation must focus on developing and providing high quality social services in the most cost-effective way possible. This last motive can be pursued through a multi-stakeholder governance and a de-institutionalization of the process of social innovation</p>

Building blocks	Dimensions	Elements
Approach	Methodology	<p>Openness: A way for social innovation to pursue social means is being open to the local territorial and cultural specificities (e.g. adopting an open process which relies on the inventiveness of local civil society organizations, communities, businesses and public servants)</p> <p>Bottom-up and participatory approach: Social innovation arises from an integrated bottom-up and participative approach rather than a more traditional top-down approach</p> <p>Multi-disciplinarity: Social innovation can emerge from multiple sources. Thus, adopting a multidisciplinary approach makes it possible to draw in experiences and insights from a wide range of sources</p>
	Accountability	<p>Transparency: As social innovation gains in importance and accorded awareness, there is a push towards transparency. This comes from a rising demand to compare and evaluate the goals, processes, action and achieved results of social innovation programmes, initiatives or policies. This is especially true for potential funders and investors</p> <p>Metrics of evaluation: It is also important to set specific metrics to evaluate the performance and results of social innovations. Some examples of metrics are: number of applications to programmes, number of ventures supported, follow-on investment raised by ventures, survival rate of ventures, number of employees of ventures, gender balance of applicants and supported founders, etc.</p>
Process	Multistage process	<p>The process of social innovation consists of six stages: The first stage involves diagnosing the problem and framing the question of how to tackle the root causes of that issue; the second one regards idea generation and all the methods used to support it; the third stage refers to prototyping, piloting and refining the idea in order to test it in practice; the fourth step involves sharpening the idea and ensuring long-term sustainability; the fifth one regards scaling and spreading the innovation in order to bring it to the public; the last stage is achieving systemic change, which is the ultimate goal of social innovation</p>
	Aftermath	<p>Sustainability: Once a social innovation has been developed, finding the right streams of sustainability is a key aspect for a long-term social impact</p> <p>Diffusion: Social innovation should spread through an “S-form” curve; it is critical to achieve the tipping point in order to increase the number of potential users</p> <p>Replicability: Potential use of newly created solutions in other contexts</p>

Building blocks	Dimensions	Elements
Players	Multi-stakeholder governance	<p>Public and private: Social innovation could be fostered by partnerships between public and private actors. This interrelation can be carried out at different levels (e.g. at the financial, operational or strategic level)</p> <p>Hybridization: Social innovation requires hybridization and matching of different goals, interests, experiences and mindsets creates breeding grounds for cross-fertilization processes and, therefore, for social innovation</p> <p>Distributed ownership: Social innovation is a common good</p>
	Networks	<p>Formal and informal: Partnerships could take the form of both formal and informal collaboration</p> <p>Local and national/international: Partnerships could involve actors operating at both local and national/international level</p> <p>Small and big: Social innovation could be achieved through alliances and interrelations between local communities (e.g. individuals and civil society organizations) and keystone organizations (e.g. governments, businesses, NGOs). Communities have new ideas and a higher capability to cross-pollinate; keystone organizations are generally better at implanting new ideas and have the resilience and scale to make things happen</p>
Background conditions	Ecosystem	<p>Regulatory framework: Public authorities and policy-makers should create the breeding ground conditions to sustain social innovation initiatives</p> <p>Incubation spaces: They support scaling processes of social ventures and the development of the social entrepreneurship sector in general</p> <p>Barriers: One key point concerns overcoming contingent barriers to social innovation (e.g. tightly monopolized power, absence of free communication, difficulties in finding independent sources of money)</p> <p>Funding: Another key aspect regards the development and implementation of specific forms of funding (e.g. social venture capital, grant funding, EU funds, national funds)</p>

From the above proposed model, it is evident that social innovations are the result of a complex set of actions, involving a web of relations for the engagement of a variety of stakeholders. The importance of the existence of an “innovation ecosystem” as a key background is well acknowledged in the model.

Social innovation models and processes can be beneficial to CURANT, as to any complex intervention impacting simultaneously on several levels and targets. Mapping current landscape of interventions on minor refugees and other

sensitive targets at risk can help to identify new potential stakeholders. Engaging those stakeholders in co-designing new collaboration models can lead to new sustainable models for CURANT moving forward. Lastly, citizens’ engagement in co-producing integration activities can lead to a more favourable public opinion and political buy in. The CURANT team is currently working on some of the above dimensions, there is a potential for an increased adoption of social innovation models and approaches that can benefit the project and its stakeholders.

## 6. Conclusions

The issue of integration of refugees is clearly back on the EU agenda, in terms of labour market integration, education, housing, healthcare, contact with the society and cultural orientations (including attitudes towards refugees). CURANT's innovativeness comes from its focus on personalised support, built around an integrated platform for integration. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to read the CURANT project in Antwerp in the larger context of policy innovation on integration at the European level. It is in fact cities who are experimenting the most, displaying a variety of interesting approaches to solve the challenge and increasing collaboration among them to learn from each other. This also calls for a comparative analysis of the results achieved by those experimentations, as all planned for sophisticated monitoring and measuring methodologies, and for an increased effort to disseminate those results and create opportunities for peer learning across the continent.

As CURANT enters its last year, it is also crucial to start thinking about the future after the projects ends, with implications for both sustainability and dissemination. Even if the project has already built into the model some revenue streams, the sustainability challenge will require the development of a service and funding model that would ensure the continuation of the support programme CURANT offers, and perhaps its scaling. The answer to this challenge can come from adopting a social innovation model in the design of the next cycle of interventions, engaging a large group of stakeholders that would go beyond the current circle of project partners.

In the next Journal, besides regular updates on project implementation, we will be focussing on how the project will have been affected by the change in the local government, and how the internal conversation about the project sustainability is progressing.

Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) is an Initiative of the European Union that provides urban areas throughout Europe with resources to test new and unproven solutions to address urban challenges. Based on article 8 of ERDF, the Initiative has a total ERDF budget of EUR 372 million for 2014-2020.

UIA projects will produce a wealth of knowledge stemming from the implementation of the innovative solutions for sustainable urban development that are of interest for city practitioners and stakeholders across the EU. This journal is a paper written by a UIA Expert that captures and disseminates the lessons learnt from the project implementation and the good practices identified. The journals will be structured around the main challenges of implementation identified and faced at local level by UIA projects. They will be published on a regular basis on the UIA website.



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