

**Minor-Ndako** is a non-profit organization founded in 2000, the name is derived from the Latin word for a child under the age of 18, a *minor*, *ndako* is the word for home in Lingala, one of the language spoken in the Republic of the Congo. The aim of the organization was, and is to this day, providing shelter and care for Unaccompanied Minors. But the care we want to provide for these kids goes further than simple bed, bread and bath, we want to provide individual care, in small groups

Each unaccompanied minor who arrives in Belgium is assigned a legal guardian by the court of justice, Minor-Ndako works closely with these guardians.

The guidance and care for these UAM is provided in three different units.

**Minor**; is a classically structured residential group, where the children under 16 live after they have arrived in Belgium, they live here full time. The aim is to provide a safe haven, where everyone accepts each others integrity and acknowledges the common fundamental laws and values. These values and attitudes are explicitly communicated in the day to day life in the group. Through structure and a good atmosphere we want to teach the children social skills and provide them with a sense of safety and security.

The assistance and aid provided is four fold;

*Individual support*; Each UAM is assigned an individual supervisor, this person is a confidant and will assist the UAM where and when needed. The assistance provided will differ per child depending on their need. Every child can also ask to see the residential psychologist either individually or in group therapy.

*Administrative and legal support*; Every UAM is provided with help to get all their paperwork and administrative formalities in order. To make this process go as fast as possible this we work closely with the legal guardians. The individual supervisor is also in constant contact with the institution that referred the UAM to Minor-Ndako. The institutions that refer the UAM to us include the committee of Specialized Youth Care and the Social Service of the Youth Court.

*Group work*; Living in the residential group is an important part of the care provided by Minor. We offer a wide variety of sports, games, holiday camps, excursions and other activities. We aim to help the UAM adjust to our society, rules and habits in a relaxing and comfortable surrounding. They also learn to live with other people, from different backgrounds, origins and with different beliefs.

*Care after leaving*; When the children leave the residential group Minor they are still welcome. Our doors will always be open to anyone who want to come say hello or needs help to with any practical matters, as long as we don’t interfere with other services.

When the UAM turn 16 they can transfer from Minor to Major.

**Major** aim to help UAM over 16 years of age adjust from living in a structured residential group to living independently. The children still live in a group but have more freedom and responsibilities that the children living in Minor. There is always a supervisor present but the children have to organize certain things amongst each other, house hold duties, cooking and budgeting. There is a weekly meeting with all the residents of the group. We hope to provide the kids with certain social and practical skills such as; making appointments, taking responsibilities and becoming self-reliant.

When the UAM is between 16-18 and they are ready they can move into our **studio training**. The UAM will be provided with a studio that is linked to Minor. They will sign a rental agreement that has to be renewed every 3 months. They will still receive assistance, mostly when it comes to budgeting, the upkeep of the apartment, cleaning and self-reliance. Once the UAM live in a studio they receive a weekly allowance that they can spent on the necessary. They have to keep track of all the money they spent so they can tell their supervisors.

All the groups discussed above are based in Brussels, there is an equivalent fro each group in Aalst, East-Flanders.

One more of our projects deserves a special indication. Lisanga is a project from Minor-Ndako that is outside Special Youth Care. This project is financed by the European Refugee Fund. Lisanga is solely focused on Unaccompanied Foreign Minor between 16 and 18, whom are here as acknowledged refugees.