

*L'Olivier*



**Service pour**

**les étrangers**

***1996 asbl***

*(Entité reconnue d'insertion fédérale)*

## **« The Friends of l'Olivier »**

### **Description of the initiative**

#### **What is « L'Olivier 1996 » ?**

We are a service which specializes in providing (legal, material and pastoral) assistance and support to foreign nationals in difficulty throughout the Brussels region. We help all migrants in distress without exception, regardless of their status and position in Belgium or their country of origin.

Our small core team is made up exclusively of volunteers, who now have 20 years of experience in the fields of legal support and advice on asylum and regularisation applications, and of the provision of material assistance to suffering, excluded and impoverished 'foreigners in a strange land'.

The "Olivier" project aims to assist foreign nationals, who are in search of (inter)national protection, in their struggles to escape exclusion and social and legal fragility, in a reasoned and humane fashion and in full respect of the applicable legislation. Our legal and social services supply advice, information and assistance in shaping and drafting appeals (when these are founded and when a positive outcome is a possibility), in order both to guarantee that the national administrations will provide appropriate follow-up and to facilitate contacts between migrants and their legal counsel. Through our social service, we also provide modest social and material assistance to meet the various urgent subsistence needs of our beneficiaries and their families.

The « Olivier » makes no distinction among migrants requesting its help, be they displaced persons, (potential and actual) asylum-seekers, undocumented migrants or persons having lodged a regularisation application. Our assistance is provided free of charge, but beneficiaries are more than welcome to make a donation should their means allow.

**We remain determined to maintain the independence of our activities, and to continue to assist all those foreign nationals who are in difficulty in Belgium, regardless of their status.** To this end, we have consistently chosen to function exclusively thanks to the compassion and generosity of our donors, big and small. In its search for financial and other support, the charity therefore reaches out to all those who care about refugees and migrants, who are consistently marginalised and are poor among the poor. Our fixed costs and overheads are kept very low, as our migrant friends have such need of all ou raid (material, emotional, legal and psychological), in all parts of their lives.

## **Who are the « Friends of l'Olivier », and what do they do?**

They are a very mixed group, made up of persons of good will and generosity who:

- *are sensitive to and care about the difficulties experienced by refugees and asylum-seekers*
- *are interested in the problem of migration as a phenomenon and*
- *would like to help the « Olivier 1996 » charity in its activities and initiatives, within the limits of their individual abilities, availability and resources.*

The “Friends” agree to help the “Olivier” at one remove, without necessarily seeking to join the core group of volunteers. Always as a function of their own circumstances, they answer one-off requests from the asbl, which vary with changes in the international situation, and thence within Belgium’s provision for immigration and asylum. Each person helps us, regularly or from time to time, in his or her own fashion; here are just a few examples of this support:

- Publicising the various consciousness-raising and information initiatives and events (see our website at [www.lolivier1996.be](http://www.lolivier1996.be)) which we regularly organize for those who seek to know the facts in matters of asylum, and to inform migrants themselves of their rights and obligations. We request that you use your own networks, communities and contacts to reach out as widely as possible by email, personal contact, small groups etc....
- Undertaking actively to support our efforts through one-off or regular fundraising activities, once again taking advantage of your own networks and contacts among like-minded friends, colleagues and acquaintances
- Possibly taking part in the activity of our ‘refugee visitors group’, which works in close collaboration with the « Olivier »’s main services and provides tailored, personal, hands-on friendship and support to distressed migrant families. This work can be done at weekends or in the evenings, and is therefore particularly suitable for those in full-time employment who wish to have direct contact with the migrant population. Support and training is provided, no specialized skills are necessary: common sense and an open heart are sufficient qualifications!
- Assisting with our constant search for additional premises, either without charge or on loan, which would enable the « Olivier » to extend its social and pastoral outreach and assistance to migrants, and increase the efficiency of such essential action
- Envisaging the provision of a monthly standing order payment to the “Olivier” ; even a modest monthly donation of 20 or 30 euros would greatly help us to budget and reach more poor families among the migrant ‘walking wounded’
- Agreeing, from time to time and by mutual agreement, to carry out one-off tasks to assist the refugees who request our help. This could (among many other possibilities) consist of accompanying someone to a hospital or a doctor’s surgery, of helping draft a letter or complete a form, of explaining some facts relating to life in Belgium etc. etc.

We thank you most sincerely, in advance, for reading thus far and for entertaining the idea of supporting the asbl’s volunteers and those they help, by joining the « Friends of the Olivier » ! If you would like to discuss this possibility or ask us questions, please do not hesitate to call us and/or consult our website at the below address...

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(Heures d’ouverture : lundi à vendredi de 9h à 13h, et sur rendez-vous)