

# Business Model Canvas (BMC)

For: Elief Nursery in Antwerp (Belgium)

Date: 16/11/2020

## Partners

- **Referring bodies:**
  - organisations such as the Public Employment Service (VDAB), the Public Welfare Centre (OCMW), Child and Family;
  - ensure intake and referral, so that Elief does not have to fill the places itself.
- **Child and Family:**
  - provides funding.
- **The City of Antwerp:**
  - provides funding (including for the building, via city funds);
  - pre-finances funded places to bridge the period until subsidies are paid;
  - supports the vision of occasional childcare.
- **Other nurseries in the same umbrella non-profit organisation:**
  - increases impact and helps to achieve more;
  - visibility and brand;
  - a board of directors that helps develop a vision, looks for opportunities and provides a network.

## Activities

- **Strong teamwork:**
  - there are monthly team meetings;
  - reflection is encouraged;
  - the coordinator provides coaching-on-the-job.
- **Planning and administration:**
  - there is a dynamic planning system that is adjusted virtually on a daily basis;
  - overbooking in order to meet the needs of parents facing an emergency, and close monitoring of the occupancy rate at the same time.
- **Pedagogical principles:**
  - a carefully devised settling-in policy adapted to occasional childcare;
  - centred on the local community;
  - emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism, including a diverse team of employees.

## Value

- **Close by and engaged:**
  - works with families from the local area;
  - there is intense contact between children, parents and nursery staff due to the high ratio (staff:child ratio is 1 to 5);
  - parents are welcome in the nursery.
- **Flexibility:**
  - all families receive a flexible childcare plan;
  - urgent demands get priority;
  - no advance payment;
  - unlimited possibilities to swap days or change the planning according to families' needs;
  - families can ask for changes whenever they like;
  - flexible drop-off and collection times;
  - no or very limited waiting list.

## User relations

- **Local focus.**
- **Customer focus:** creating added value for every family by ensuring a welcoming, warm environment and offering a solution for flexible childcare needs.
- **Accessibility and personal approach:** childcare and parenting support; very approachable team.

## Channels

*No extra marketing or promotion required thanks to a long history of cooperation and an established name in the city and the local area.*

- **Cooperation with referring bodies:** organisations that refer families, such as VDAB, OCMW, Child and Family.
- **Local visibility:** some parents came to this nursery themselves as children; it is well known and becoming better known through word-of-mouth advertising.

## Users

*A social mix of families with varying degrees of vulnerability and varying needs for occasional childcare.*

- **Parents who are not (yet) working** (about 60% of the children):
  - on a training course or integration programme;
  - fall into the category of 'vulnerable parents' according to the Flemish Child and Family agency;
  - have occasional childcare needs.
- **Parents from the local area** (about 40% of the children):
  - not vulnerable and usually working;
  - childcare needs are often irregular among these parents, for example due to irregular working hours.

## People and resources

- **Board of directors:** there is a strong and committed board of directors that provides support in the background.
- **Good planning system.**
- **Owned building:** the nursery owns its premises, through the city fund, so there are no additional rental or loan repayment costs.
- **Permanent core of highly experienced employees** (+15 years in service) supplemented by a varying group of trainees.

## Costs

- **Staff costs:** the nursery employs more staff than other nurseries of a similar size – offering occasional childcare requires plenty of staff. This is affordable because the team is composed of experienced staff and (subsidised) trainees.
- **Building:** maintenance and furnishings.

## Income

- **Childcare funding:**
  - sometimes provided by the City of Antwerp pending the payment of childcare funding by Child and Family;
  - subject to Child and Family funding conditions.
- **Work and Economy funding from the Flemish region:** part of the staff are people in training to become an early years practitioner. Often these are people living in vulnerable circumstances.
- **Usual childcare subsidies:** if families do not come or if an occasional childcare place is not filled, the funding is lost. Occasional childcare is disadvantageous in such circumstances.

# Occasional childcare Elief Nursery in Antwerp (Belgium)



**Elief is a nursery that offers occasional childcare for parents unable to use a regular nursery. Parents can start quickly at Elief or they can use it for shorter periods. Often, the parents follow an employment or training programme or urgently need childcare for other reasons. Elief is located in the city of Antwerp and is partly subsidised by the city. The organisation is part of a larger non-profit organisation.**

## Why is it necessary?

Most childcare systems require parents to plan care well in advance and to use at least a few full or half-days per week. This is not always compatible with families' needs and financial capabilities. For families, the barrier to childcare is really lowered if they are allowed to try out care without any additional obligations or commitment. Occasional childcare enables families to explore childcare at their own pace. Many families start with one or a few hours, and then build things up slowly. Occasional childcare can also be adapted to specific situations. For example, a parent working with temporary contracts has the option to use more childcare when working and less when at home.

## What strategies help?

Offering childcare at times when parents need it, for example when they have appointments or are on a course. In order to guarantee a place for parents who need to get started quickly, for example because they are going to work or dealing with a crisis situation, the nursery has to ensure that places are available. This can be done by reserving places every day and ensuring that families whose childcare needs evolve into a more regular pattern can quickly make the transition to a fixed place. This means that they do not keep the occasional place occupied.

## How might that look in practice?

In practice, Elief works with a combination of occasional and regular places. Some children come regularly for a longer period of time, while others only come for a short period, for example while their parents are on a training course or employment programme. There are also always places available for parents with urgent childcare needs. There is no waiting time and the administration for parents for getting started at the nursery is limited.