

“Never having to deal with bureaucracy alone”

(The following article by Paul de Theux first appeared in the April 2015 issue of *L’Appel*, pp. 12-13). In 2001 a team of volunteers from the Brussels neighborhood of Koekelberg, under the leadership of the Assumptionists, launched an innovative initiative: accompanying individuals in need as they went through required administrative hoops to receive social services. The idea, simple though it may have been, answered a real need. In 15 years this non-profit organization, called “Accompagner” (“Accompany”), has lent a hand to more than 5,000 people. At the 2011 general chapter of the Assumptionists it was named one of 7 'mobilizing works' of the institute, works that, by virtue of the nature and quality of their work, serve as flagship ministries deserving of widespread support and imitation throughout the Congregation.)

It all began with a prayer group active downtown. “We said to ourselves that we couldn’t pray for these people without knowing what their concerns were,” explained Fr. Guy Leroy, an Assumptionist, a member of the group. “That’s how we began to accompany people through all the administrative steps they needed to take to receive assistance. I remember a young Syrian woman who learned three days before her twenty-first birthday that she could receive Belgian citizenship if she completed all the necessary paperwork before that date. We worked with her non-stop for those three days. The last day, just in the nick of time, she obtained the stamp she needed to complete her file.”



accompagner



