



2014-1-HU01-KA203-002367

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL INNOVATION COMPETITION

**Project title or
name of the social enterprise:**

CosyStudying-Brings young and old together

**Keywords (max. 5) describing
your social business idea:**

High school/university students, lack of studyplaces, retirees,
elderly people, loneliness

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team representative:**

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Represented country:

Belgium



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROJECT

COSYSTUDYING-BRINGS YOUNG AND OLD TOGETHER

The CosyStudying team consists of four university students at the VUB (Free University Brussel). When we take in consideration our own needs and requirements on the campus of the VUB, we found out that there aren't so many suitable studyplaces during the exam period. A lot of students are studying in the university library or other facilities that are offered on the VUB-campus, but most of them are full half hour after opening. This leads to time-wasting of students, while the time in this period is valuable. This need was the key to start a project. When we thought about the development of the project, we discovered a second social problem, namely the loneliness of the retiree elderly people. In that case, we came to the perfect solution for these two social needs. Older people catch students who are looking for a place to study at home. By doing so CosyStudying will ensure that the elderly people have a new care project and don't feel lonely anymore, and that high school or university students have a quiet place to study their material.

Definition of the problem

During the exam periods, more and more students have to wait hours to get a place in a public learning room like a library, etc. Students who can't study at home or anywhere else for particular circumstances, are often faced with this problem during the most stressful period of the year. While getting good grades is related to a minimum of stress and a good night's rest. According to CosyStudying association this is impossible when high school or university students are annoyed and exhausted by the search for a suitable and quiet place to study. These facts will lead to bad learning outcomes and school performance, little motivation to study, individual learning paths, what leads to a longer stay at the school or school leaving. These things will cost the government a lot of money, whilst the government will be saving costs.

When people go into retirement, mostly they get bored, don't go out, have nothing to do and final they get a depression and lose their social network. When this problem continues when people get older, they will be dependent of home care, have to go to hospitals with several problems, and arrive earlier than normal in a nursing home. Important to know is that Flanders, but also other countries have to contend with the ageing problem. So the future won't get better. The amount of older people increases fast, whilst there is a shortage of residential care centres. When these older people can stay longer at home, the lack of residential care centres will be reduced and will not cost a lot to the government.

Solution of CosyStudying

As said, there are two functional social values in which CosyStudying anticipates. First to increase the quality of higher and university education and to improve the learning outcomes of high school or university students. Secondly to tackle the loneliness of retiree older people that live at home.



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In answer to the lack of places to study on the campus of high schools and universities, CosyStudying offers the opportunity to students to study by dwelling retiree older people. This solution will meet to the needs of students, as well at the social phenomenon of loneliness of older people. This second aspect is omnipresent because of the ageing problem in Flanders, but also in the rest of the world. Students are the future of our society. Therefore, it is important that the society works on a high education quality.

Students can apply a studyplace at all time, so stress will be avoided and better learning outcomes, less individual learning paths will be reached. When students can study at dwelling retiree older people, there arises a care project for the elderly people. This care project will decrease the feelings of loneliness and will increase the social network of the elderly people.

The ultimate purpose which CosyStudying aimed, is that students have a realistic view of older people and vice-versa, so the gap between the two target groups will be minimized. CosyStudying is setting social cohesion in the centre and will reinforce the ties between young and old. These two central values will be used to attract customers.

Resources and support

If CosyStudying will reach the values, there are some resources and support of people needed. CosyStudying has a great expertise to provide both target groups of good support. To reach this, CosyStudying works together with several partners, namely with:

- **Elderly organizations** (OKRA, VLOZO, Generatie NU-Jong van hart, ZorgNet-ICURO): These organizations advertise the mission, purpose and operation of CosyStudying to the target group, namely elderly retired people who live at home.
- **Home care** (Wit-Gele Kruis): These organizations advertise the mission, purpose and operation of CosyStudying to the target group, namely elderly retired people who live at home.
- **Flemish High schools and universities:** They make publicity for CosyStudying to the second target group, namely high school or university students. These partners also give an amount of money to CosyStudying.
- **Student associations**
- **Flemish government:** This partner gives CosyStudying the opportunity to start up CosyStudying through/by giving grants.
- **Staff:** The staff must meet to a number of requirements. For example, they must be well documented about social issues, but must not have a special certificate.



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What is and how is CosyStudying working

CosyStudying is a project which got started by independent students. The project has a social purpose and isn't focused on making profit. If there is any profit, this will be reinvested in the project. The main purpose is to offer students a suitable place to study and to prevent feelings of loneliness by retiree older people. These two aspects have effects for the government, in the sense that there will be cost savings, through contribute to high education quality and the ageing problem. Also high schools and universities have a benefit with this project, because of the extension of places to study. CosyStudying will receive money through grants of the Flemish government, gifts from high schools, universities and elderly organizations, and also via the registration fee of students and Crowdfunding.

CosyStudying will reach students and elderly people at several ways. There is for example a brochure for the two ages. This brochure will be given to students at the university and to elderly people through home care or at elderly organizations. As well there is a website of CosyStudying (<http://cosystudying-be.webnode.be>) where both groups can find information about the organization, but also the questionnaires for students and elderly people. Students can choose if they want dinner and/or a sleeping place, for how long they will stay, in which area (nearby the campus or home) and so on. Also the host family must fill in the questionnaire. They can describe for how long they will take a guest and if they offer dinner and a sleeping place.

Students can make an account and a profile against a small registration fee (5€-10€ depending on the options they want at the study place). Older people can also make an account via the website or going to CosyStudying itself. When the profiles are finished and questionnaires are filled in, the organization can begin with matching profiles of students and the older people. The three best matches are sent to the two target groups. Then, they can choose by their own. If they have chosen, they can arrange the settlement.

At the end of the stay of students at dwelling retiree elderly people, there is the opportunity and time to give feedback on the project, the stay, the relation between student and host family and so on. This rating of students and host family is important to improve the organization. The sustainability will be guaranteed through the grants of the Flemish government, registration fees of students and crowdfunding.

In practice it isn't difficult to realize this project. There is a need by students to find suitable place to study and there are lot of lonely elderly people in the society, thus the project is very actual. But maybe there can be some difficulties to reach the two target groups. Maybe not many elderly people want to give a student a place to study in their own, or students don't want to study at this people because of the distance and preconceptions relative to elderly people and vice-versa.

This project is innovative in the sense that there doesn't exist such specific project in Flanders. But there are projects that offer students a unique place to study, as for example in monastery, vacant buildings, churches and so on. But these do not focus on the loneliness of elderly people.

Annex



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Case Study: VUB-students

To get a better view of the need of students for places to study, we make a case study on fb with a poll to interrogate VUB-students on this matter.

This case study proved that half of the students that filled in the poll on fb experience difficulties to find a good place to study and report a need on this.