



YouthPartnership

QUESTIONNAIRE

“INFORMATION”

BELGIUM FLANDERS



YouthPartnership
Council of Europe
European Commission



Education and Culture DG



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1 Information services

1.1 Legal framework of the youth information service

In the Flemish Parliament Act (18 July 2008) on Flemish youth policy and the Flemish Parliament Act of 14 February 2003 youth information provisions are specified as lending support to and providing incentives for municipal, inter-municipal and provincial youth and youth work policy. The Flemish government encourages youth work initiatives to disseminate information to young people. The youth policy report (2004-2009) treats youth information as a key concern. A coherent, highly performing and particularly effective youth information policy across the different policy areas is a priority in this policy memorandum on youth. Specific items in this policy report include: a portal site for youth information, definition of youth information, making an inventory of youth information activities, youth involvement in preparing information, accessibility of information, assessing information, information coordination and information quality. In the second Flemish Youth Policy Plan (2006-2010) reference is made to joint objectives. The creation of the Vlaams InformatiePunt Jeugd [Flemish Youth Information Point] was one of the objectives. (Source: <http://www.jips.be/medewerkers/index.cfm?id=122>)

The implementation of article 17 from the CRC (International Convention on the Rights of the Child) concerning access to appropriate information will be dealt with in the five-yearly report relating to the implementation of the CRC. Flanders contributes to this report. In addition, the Flemish Government reports to the Flemish Parliament and the Children's Rights Commissioner on an annual basis. This is a follow-up of the 15-07-1997 act stating 'that the views of the child effect report (KER) and the checking of government policy comply with the Rights of the Child. (Source: national report 'Information' on cjsm website)

1.2 Youth information points at national and regional level

There are 2 youth information points at national level and 131 youth information points at regional level (121 in Flanders and 10 in Brussels).

Careers guidance (e.g. <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/CLB/>);

Studies and scholarships (e.g. <http://www.pienternet.be>); Jobs and training (e.g. <http://www.vdab.be>, <http://www.studentenjobs.be>);

General health matters (e.g. <http://www.kopp-vlaanderen.be>);

Relationships and sexuality (e.g. <http://www.allesoverseks.be>, <http://www.jeugdseksualiteit.be>, <http://www.mijnpil.be>);

Social security benefits (e.g. <http://www.mijnsocialezekerheid.be>);

Rights of young people (e.g.

<http://www.kinderrechtencommissariaat.be><http://www.wvg.vlaanderen.be/jongerenwelzijn/jolijn/index.htm> : JO-lijn);

Legal advice (e.g. <http://www.kinderrechtswinkel.be>);

European opportunities for young people (e.g. <http://www.jint.be> : JongerenPuntBuitenland);

Youth activities and exchanges (e.g. <http://www.verdraaidewereld.be>).

1.3 Please list the specialized areas covered by youth information in your country (going beyond the general youth information, such as career guidance).

N/A

1.4 Youth portals:

There are 13 youth portals on national level and 5 youth portals on regional level. (Source: questionnaires 2007 as can be found on Youth Partnership website)

In general, information is provided about: culture, youth work, sports, training, tourism, overseas, media, traffic and transport, organisation and participation, society, health, sexuality, relations, stimulants, education, work, accommodation, rights and duties, money, violence and abuse, children's rights, leisure, legal affairs, accommodation, social institutions.

The Flemish government asked 6 organisations from the is field of work to develop 3 information guides and websites for children (< 12 years), teenagers (12-15 years) and youngsters (> 15 years). The websites have been online and the printed versions have been distributed since 2006.

Source:

http://www.cjsm.vlaanderen.be/jeugdbeleid/beleid/vlaams_jeugdbeleidsplan/jaarverslag/monitoring/jeugdinformatie/OD_3.1.1/actie_3.1.1.4.htm)

The products provide correct information tailored to the age groups. They provide information about a wide range of issues. (source: <http://www.vipjeugd.be/project/>)

- <http://www.kidsgids.be> the Kidsgids (Guide for Kids) is linked to this (<12 years)
- <http://www.life1215.be> Life@1215 (12-15 years) is linked to this
- <http://www.jongereninformatie.be> the Jongerengids (Youth Guide) (>15 years) is linked to this

Other youth portals with a short description of their content (this is not an exhaustive list:

- <http://www.jongerenplaneet.be/> : general, summary site
- <http://www.kinderrechtswinkel.be/> : documentation about children's rights
- <http://www.unicefkids.be/unicefkids/> : This is a website from the Belgian Committee for Unicef which was especially created for children and youngsters. This offers information about children's rights for children all over the world.

- <http://www.kjt.org/> : The Kinder en Jongerentelefoon (Childline) is a phone line for children and youngsters who want to discuss a problem, who want information about a particular subject, etc. The most common issues are: loneliness, spots, anxiety, fights, homework, friendship, divorced parents, bullying, boredom, being in love and discussions with parents.
- <http://www.allesoverseks.be/> : This is a unique site in Flanders that formulates digital answers to questions about relationships and sexuality for 15 to 25 year olds.
- <http://weljongniethetero.be/> : Providing information and raising awareness about homosexuality/bisexuality is an important aim of Wel Jong Niet Hetero (Young but not Hetero).
- <http://www.kindermishandeling.org/VK/> : This is the website for the Vertrouwenscentrum Kindermishandeling (Child Abuse Confidentiality Centre). Children, parents and carers can go to this centre for all sorts of information about child abuse and the various centres.
- <http://www.jeugdenvrede.be/> : Website about upbringing for youngsters and youth work
- <http://www.maks.be/> : The magazine called Maks provides young people with information on education.

2 Access for young people

2.1 Number of young people using the information services

18,000 persons

2.2 Is there a mobile information service?

Yes.

The '**Condomobiel**' provides information on safe sex. The Condomobile is to be found at music festivals and other events.

JAC's organise **youth exhibitions**, for example on the defensibility of youngsters. (<http://www.spidercop.com/cultuur/jongerenbeurs-2008-niet-smeerbaar-maar-weerbaar.htm>)

A number of organisations offer information to **schools** (pupils from secondary education) with a multimedia and interactive package (for example on the subjects of drugs, sexuality, teenage pregnancy, ...)

A **JIP pillar** with appropriate information is a ready-made package for offering local information tailored to youngsters, close to where they naturally spend their time. The info pillar contains information files on about twenty (changing) themes. Information is up to date and links with young peoples' interests. The information is very *basic* but youngsters are referred to JIP via both information files and the pillar.

(<http://www.vvj.be/content/infozuil>)

Information media are distributed, for example, cd-roms: Sexplorer (on the subject of love and sexuality), SLIK (on the subject of drugs), ... (Source: Maatschappelijke Jongeren Actie [Social Youth Action]: <http://www.mja.be>)

Mobile School non-profit organisation is a Belgian organisation that works for street children worldwide. Under the motto *'Bring the school to the street' the organisation develops mobile school carts and provides training for local street workers*. There are currently 24 mobile schools in 14 countries, spread over 4 continents.

(<http://www.mobileschool.org/>)

3 Ensuring quality of information

3.1 Please list the places where you can obtain training and knowledge relating to youth information

There are no universities that offer courses on the delivery of youth information and there are 3 training centres that are specialised in youth information.

3.2 What are the quality standards applied for youth information in your country (e.g. ISO 9000 Series, ERYICA charter, national standards etc.)

In the Vlaams Jeugdbeleidsplan (Flemish Youth Policy Plan) 2006-2009, it is a basic principle that, within the various departments and agencies, governmental information for children and youngsters is drawn up in accordance with the ERYICA principles. (Source: Vlaams Jeugdbeleidsplan [Flemish Youth Policy Plan], general text, point 3.4.1, p. 64) Youth Information Points (JIPs) and the Youth Advice Centres (JACs) comply with the ERYICA Charter.

Policy recommendations from a Flemish investigation (Custers, K., Mortelmans, D., Vandebosch, H. & Walrave, M., 2006) state that the Flemish Youth Information Point could develop a quality label and quality standards to which the information actors must answer, this could also be used by the government to indicate a difference between the quality label in contrast to youth-focussed and general information providers. (Source: Custers, K., Mortelmans, D., Vandebosch, H. & Walrave, M. (2006). *Jeugdinformatie in Vlaanderen. Eindrapport [Youth information in Flanders. Final Report]*. UA, Faculteit PSW, p. 230) The development of a quality label and quality standards by VIPJeugd (Flemish Youth Information Point) is also included in the Vlaams Jeugdbeleidsplan [Flemish Youth Policy Plan] 2006-2009. (Source: Vlaams Jeugdbeleidsplan [Flemish Youth Policy Plan], general text, point 3.2.1, p. 61)

The Flemish government is considering implementing a viewing certification system according to the Dutch example. The viewing certification system is a self-regulating system for the audio-visual sector that uses icons to provide information about the content of the

data carriers (video, DVDs, CDs, games etc). (Source: Vlaams Jeugdbeleidsplan [Flemish Youth Policy Plan], general text, point 3.3.2, p. 63)

The CRC offers ethical standards for youth information in Flanders. (Source: National report 'Information' as can be found on cjsm website)

3.3 What existing monitoring systems are in place for checking the quality of information dissemination?

The non-profit organisation previously known as Delta has been integrated into the Flemish Youth Information Point since January 2007. The main tasks of the VIPJeugd are: research and development, data management, support, coaching, training and promotion.

VIP concentrates on 4 different target groups: youngsters from the age of 12 to 25 and children from 6 years old; JIP employees; organisations that offer information to children and youngsters; intermediaries who fulfil an important role in relation to children and youngsters: youth (information) workers, teachers, people from the CLB (Centre for Student Counselling), people who work with particular target groups, welfare workers, etc. (Source: <http://www.jips.be/medewerkers/index.cfm?id=122>)

The approval conditions for JIP (approval of *Vlaams InformatiePunt Jeugd* [Flemish Youth Information Point]) which supports and trains JIP's are as follows: the VIPJeugd [VIP Youth] and JIPS information services meet the following criteria: they are up-to-date, objective, accurate, relevant, based on self-help, comprehensive, accessible, clear, attractive. In order to be accredited as JIP, a number of additional principles must be applied: Young people are target group, situated in the immediate living environment, demand-driven, respect for the applicant for information, specialised as a mediator, integrated in the local socio-cultural landscape, an embedded service. JIPs have a common logo, a quality label. JACs use a quality guide. All JIPSs have the same information classification system on the basis of various themes. The folders provided by VIP Jeugd to JIPs via its distribution system are also structured according to these themes. (Source: <http://www.jips.be/medewerkers/index.cfm?id=164>)

4 Participation of young people in the information process:

Information disseminated via the JIPs and JACs is prepared by people involved in youth information. In the case of each activity, In Petto* cooperates with a working group comprising young people and related figures. The method of peer questioning is a participative research method in which the target group (under supervision) is involved in all stages of the investigation and even carries out the questioning. The targeted and methodical questioning of youngsters by other youngsters provides better and more extensive information. Another method, the improvement group, involves a group of

youngsters and adults that creatively seek out the best solution to a problem. The organisation gets involved in implementing the result in practice. The power of an improvement group lies in combining the vision, knowledge and qualities of each, individual participant. Collective brainstorming also often provides a greater number of ideas that are more effective. (Source: www.inpetto-jeugddienst.be, methods) The broader youth work sector also has examples of such participatory information activities because young people are naturally closely involved with this.

Learning to deal with information is also included, in various forms, in secondary education attainment targets.

*In Petto is a youth service which is subsidised by the Flemish Government. This service specializes in youth information, youth participation and prevention. Concrete actions include providing information, training and conducting research.

The various JIPs have a large number of young volunteers. In the 'young advisers' projects youngsters between 15 and 19 are offered a short course enabling them to inform, support and help their friends with problems and, if necessary, refer them to professional support services. In 2006, at 30 different locations (in youth advisory centres and municipal youth services), more than 300 youngsters were trained to be youth advisers. The 'young advisers' project is supported by the JACs, sometimes in collaboration with a JIP and/or a municipal Youth Service. Being a 'Youth adviser' is not a job, it is an informal role. A youth adviser is involved with but not responsible for solving problems. (Source: www.inpetto-jeugddienst.be, methods). The youth adviser initiative is a form of *peer education*. (Source: Custers, K., Mortelmans, D., Vandebosch, H. & Walrave, M. (2006). *Jeugdinformatie in Vlaanderen. Eindrapport.[Youth information in Flanders. Final Report]*. UA, Faculteit PSW, p. 169)

Wegwijzer (Guidebook) and *Use-it* are tourist services for young people (travellers, visitors, students and local young people), specialising in the promotion of information exchanges between young travellers.

ICT policy in compulsory education and basic adult education is an important tool to help overcome the 'digital division' between highly qualified and less well qualified young people.