



YouthPartnership

QUESTIONNAIRE

VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

BELGIUM-FLANDERS



YouthPartnership
Council of Europe
European Commission



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1 Which types of voluntary activities exist in your country for young people, explain the different fields of activities and if possible give numbers of how many young people engage in them per year, in total and by gender?

There is no distinction between the range of activities for young people and for adults. There is a great diversity in voluntary activities undertaken by young people, both with regard to objectives and to shapes. The types of voluntary activities that are provided are primarily generated in the socio-cultural, not-for-profit sector. Young volunteers are mainly active in social activities, namely in youth work and particularly in youth movements. In addition, they are involved in various youth associations, sports associations (49.8% of young people participate, this includes those who help organise the activity), action groups such as third world organisations, human rights organisations, peace organisations, antiracist groups, environmental movements, hobby clubs, welfare and health care, the arts and cultural sector, the civil sector (unions, political parties, ...). Voluntary commitments from young people can also be linked to temporary projects/events, e.g. the organisation of a festival.

We can find voluntary work for young people in the following domains: community activity, participation/self-governance, emergency response, community peacekeeping, social assistance, personal assistance, children and youth, environment, human rights, advocacy and politics, economic justice, development aid, humanitarian aid, religious volunteering, education, arts/culture, sports, recreation.

Despite the lack of exact figures, it can be estimated that about one in five young people in Flanders is engaged as a volunteer.

2 What kind of voluntary services exist in your country and how many young people engage in them per year, in total and by gender.

An APS survey has shown that 24% of 18 to 24 year olds were working as unpaid volunteers in 2005.

<http://aps.vlaanderen.be/statistiek/cijfers/welzijn/vrijwilligers/vrijwilligerswerk.xls>

3 Financial and legal status of voluntary activities

The Flemish Government is the voluntary work's main funding source. In addition, there are a number of (semi)public and private organisations that support volunteer work/voluntary activities. One of the major sources is the Koning Boudewijnstichting (King Baudouin Foundation), an independent and pluralist foundation that aims at improving the living conditions of the population.

Sources: <http://www.kbs-frb.be>, <http://www.wvg.vlaanderen.be>, <http://www.vrijwilligerswerk.be>

The 2006 the Flemish Community's general expenditure budget included a grant for Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Point for Voluntary Work) amounting to EUR 99,000 and the grants to the provincial support centres for volunteer work amounting to EUR 148,000. In 2008 Minister Vanackere allocated 1,031,000 EUR to organised voluntary work in the welfare and health sector. This is 250,000 EUR more than in 2006. Grants to volunteer associations for educational and awareness raising projects in the monuments and sites sector totalled EUR 50,000. These grants are for volunteer work in general. Grants allocated to youth (work) initiatives also indirectly support volunteer work undertaken by young people. Grants for nationally organised youth associations amounted to 22,472,000 EUR in 2008, subsidies for international youth exchange projects amounted to 376,000 EUR in 2008, subsidies for youth culture initiatives amounted to 968,000 EUR in 2008, subsidies for the non-profit Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre) totalled 947,000 EUR in 2008, subsidies for the non-profit Jeugdraad voor de Vlaamse Gemeenschap (Youth Council for the Flemish Community) totalled 642,000 EUR in 2008, subsidies for the non-profit Vereniging van Vlaamse Jeugddiensten en –consulenten (Association of Flemish Youth Services and Consultants) totalled 285,000 EUR in 2008 and the subsidy to the non-profit organisation Jint amounted to 843,000 EUR in 2008. In 2008, subsidies for executing a local youth work policy totalled 20,002,000 EUR and subsidies for carrying out a provincial youth work policy plan totalled 1,374,000 EUR for 2008.

In terms of legal status, a vote was taken on the Act on the rights of volunteers on 3 July 2005, this was then published in the Belgian Official Gazette on 29 August 2005. Thereafter, the federal Bill of 8/05/06 DOC 2496/001 amending the Act of 3 July 2005 was unanimously passed by the House of Representatives on 8 June 2006. The Act has been effective since 1 August 2006. In this Act on the rights of volunteers, volunteer work in Belgium is described as follows: "Volunteering is a non-compulsory activity which is unsalaried and accomplished to the benefit of third parties, set up by an organisation, and which is not carried out by the same person and for the same organisation in the framework of a contract of employment, a contract of service or permanent appointment."

Volunteering is thus distinguished from professional activity (paid), voluntary involvement (unorganised) and paid voluntary involvement (a remuneration exceeding the costs). Liability, insurance, fees for volunteers are now legally defined, as is the ratio between volunteer work, labour and social security. The regulation on liability and insurances has been effective since 1 January 2007.

There is an act that recognises and subsidises autonomous voluntary work for the welfare and health sector. Here, the Flemish Government's Resolution of 30 May 2008 concerning execution of the act of 23 March 1994 relating to organised voluntary work in the welfare and health sector applies. This Resolution contains a few modifications in relation to the earlier regulations: from now on, recognition will be for an indeterminate period (not renewable on a five year basis) and grants do not need to be

requested annually (the administration itself will decide if work is being carried out around subsidised subjects on the basis of annual reports). Voluntary organisations now receive a set subsidy instead of a subsidy based on the presentation of proven costs.

Volunteers can obtain fixed compensation or real compensation for costs incurred. Cost reimbursement is exempt from taxes and from paying social security contributions. Organisations are, however, not obliged to provide a payment but must inform the volunteer of this matter. Both payments cannot be combined for one volunteer. If the volunteer prefers the repayment of real costs, he has to prove the reality and amount of these costs by means of documents with evidential value. If the volunteer prefers a fixed compensation, the amount of expenses actually incurred does not have to be proved if the total amount of allowances received does not exceed € 29.05 per day or € 1161.82 per year (01-01-2008 → 31-12-2008) (<http://www.vrijwilligersweb.be/wetgeving.htm>). However, proof has to be provided for allowances exceeding the aforementioned amounts. The maximum kilometre compensation for work trips with your own vehicle, motorbike or scooter amounts to € 0.3093/km and each organisation decides who receives this kilometre based reimbursement. These costs must be proven by the volunteer.

4 Name the main actors involved in voluntary activities for young people at a national, regional and local level in your country

Ministries or other governmental actors:

The Federal Public Service for Social Security is responsible for all regulations on the legal status of volunteers.

FOD Sociale Zekerheid, Directie-Generaal Sociaal Beleid

Eurostation II

Victor Hortaplein 40 bus 20, 1060 Brussel

tel + 32 2 528 63 00 - fax + 32 2 528 69 68

mail: [dg-soc\[at\]minsoc.fed.be](mailto:dg-soc[at]minsoc.fed.be)

<http://socialsecurity.fgov.be/>

The High Council for Volunteers is operational at federal level and collects, systemises and analyses information on volunteers and voluntary work; it undertakes research into specific problems which volunteers and voluntary work may face; gives advice with regard to volunteers and voluntary work.

Hoge Raad voor Vrijwilligers (secretariaat)

Eurostation II

Victor Hortaplein 40 bus 20, 1060 Brussel

Christian Dekeyser, tel : 02/528.64.68, fax : 02/528.69.77

mail: [Christian.Dekeyser\[at\]minsoc.fed.be](mailto:Christian.Dekeyser[at]minsoc.fed.be)

http://socialsecurity.fgov.be/NL/specifieke_info/vrijwilligers/hoge_raad/

The funding of voluntary activities and volunteer groups in the welfare and health care sectors (organised volunteer work) is laid down in Flemish Parliament Acts of the Flemish Community.

Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Departement Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Gezin

Markiesstraat 1, 1000 Brussel

tel + 32 2 553 33 30

mail: [welzijnszorg\[at\]vlaanderen.be](mailto:welzijnszorg[at]vlaanderen.be)

<http://wvg.vlaanderen.be/welzijningezondheid/>

<http://www.vlaanderen.be/vrijwilligers>

The Youth Division of the Flemish Community helps create youth volunteer work opportunities through the recognition and funding of youth (work) initiatives.

Vlaams Ministerie van Cultuur, Jeugd, Sport en Media; Agentschap Sociaal-cultureel

werk voor jeugd en volwassenen; Afdeling Jeugd.

Arenbergstraat 9, 1000 Brussel

tel +32 2 553 41 30 - fax +32 2 553 41 17

mail: [jeugd\[at\]vlaanderen.be](mailto:jeugd[at]vlaanderen.be)

<http://www.cjsm.vlaanderen.be/jeugd/>

Local and provincial youth services play a crucial role in the distribution of information and the support of initiatives launched by young people.

Non governmental actors:

Most initiatives are based on volunteers (work) in general. The King Baudouin Foundation has a number of publications on volunteer work and supports projects. It also lends financial support to the following website <http://www.vrijwilligerswerk.be/>, a partnership between 5 provincial support centres for volunteer work, Het Punt (Brussels Support Centre) and the Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer wWrk). This site contains an online database on vacant posts for volunteers and associations among other things.

Koning Boudewijnstichting

Brederodestraat 21, 1000 Brussel

tel. +32 2 511 18 40 - fax +32 2 511 52 51

mail: [info\[at\]kbs-frb.be](mailto:info[at]kbs-frb.be)

<http://www.kbs-frb.be>

The Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk provides support to voluntary activities and consists of advice, information and training. Volunteer work is also promoted by the annual "Volunteer's Week". The Vlaams Steunpunt monitors the interests of volunteer work, e.g. by monitoring policy developments. Cross-sector networking is also a key cornerstone.

Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk,

Amerikalei 164, 2000 Antwerpen

tel. +32 3 218 59 01

mail: [info\[at\]vsvw.be](mailto:info[at]vsvw.be)

<http://www.vrijwilligersweb.be>

Five provincial support centres and one Brussels based support centre coordinate voluntary activities in the Flemish provinces and Brussels. They manage a decentralised database, act as a mediator between organisations and candidate volunteers, get more people involved in volunteering and help organisations enhance the quality of their activities by providing information and training and by setting up certain initiatives. Finally, there are local support centres for volunteering.

Many organisations with a special focus on young people are commissioned to set up, support and monitor volunteer work within youth work: the 'Vlaamse Jeugdraad' (Flemish Youth Council), het 'Steunpunt Jeugd' (Youth Support Centre), JINT (Co-ordination body for International Youth Work), nationally organised youth associations, NGOs in the field of development co-operation.

5 What social protection for young volunteers exists in your country and are voluntary activities compatible with social benefits?

The ban on child labour permits voluntary work from the age of 16. Children younger than 16 cannot be active as a volunteer (unless they turn 16 in the same calendar year), except if it concerns 'activities with a pedagogic or educational' character. Some organisations further define the minimum age on the grounds of the 'target group', 'the sensitivity of the material', the responsibility that is required and so on .

The Act on the rights of volunteers contains provisions that refer to the legal status and social protection of volunteers. In principle, liability for damage caused to third parties by a volunteer lies with the organisation (= immunity principle). If deceit, gross negligence or recurrent minor faults are involved, the volunteer him/herself can be held accountable. In the context of international

volunteering, the provisions of international private law are applicable. The type of organisation in which the volunteer is active, also plays a role in the immunity principle: for organisations in which volunteers do not have immunity (small spontaneous initiatives), the rules of common law apply. So, a volunteer may be held personally liable in civil proceedings for errors he/she commits during volunteering activities for these associations. Liability does not apply to the so-called contractual liability. The Act is silent on the subject of criminal liability. A volunteer who commits a violation of the Penal Code, may be held individually liable for this. The Act makes insurance compulsory for every organisation. Currently, an organisation is only obliged to enter into an insurance policy covering civil liability which is not included in the contract. Compulsory insurance is only applicable to organisations in which volunteers are immune under the Act.

People living on social security benefits (unemployment benefit, incapacity for work benefit, income support) are allowed to do volunteer work and keep their allowance if they fulfil certain requirements (voluntary work is reported or permitted). Voluntary work in itself does not create any rights to social security. This concerns activities during free time and are not put on a par with work because no social contributions will be paid.

Volunteers do not lose the right to receive family benefit. There is no difference between younger and older unemployed people as far as the legal status of the volunteer is concerned.

Unemployed people are entitled to unemployment benefits, people taking a leave of absence who are receiving benefits and school-leavers receiving temporary benefits are allowed to do volunteer work, provided that they report this in writing to the unemployment agency of the National Employment Office (RVA – Rijksdienst voor Arbeidsvoorziening). The request can only be rejected if the RVA is able to prove that the applicant wants to do volunteer work which is not officially defined, that the activity cannot be considered as voluntary due to its nature, volume or frequency or that the unemployed person becomes less available to the labour market due to volunteer work. The onus of proof lies with the RVA, which is an important achievement of the new law passed in 2005. Formerly, the onus of proof fell on the candidate volunteer him/herself. If young people who are unfit for work and who receive disability allowance, want to take up voluntary work, the medical consultant must establish whether the voluntary work is “compatible” with the health situation of the candidate-volunteer who, as a result of an illness, disability or pregnancy, cannot perform a paid job. This is then confirmed in writing. Obtaining this recommendation is the responsibility of the volunteer. Young people who receive a living allowance must inform their welfare officer at the OCMW (Public Centre for Social Welfare) in advance about the fact that they are going to be doing voluntary work. Disabled young people who receive benefits from the FOD Social Security can take up voluntary work without having to perform any further formalities.

Young people with a replacement income can receive a payment to cover the costs of voluntary work without risking reduced benefits as long as the conditions of the law have been met.

Sources: - Belgian House of Representatives, 3rd meeting of the 51st session, 19 May 2005. Bill on the rights of volunteers, text adopted in plenary meeting and transferred to the senate. (DOC 51 – 0455/011)

- http://socialsecurity.fgov.be/NL/specifieke_info/vrijwilligers/vergoedingen.htm

- <http://www.vrijwilligersweb.be/wetgeving.htm>

- Hambach, E. (Red.) (2006). Vrijwilligerswerk: De Wet. Praktische vragen en antwoorden. Aangepaste versie september 2008' (Voluntary Work. The Law. Practical questions and answers. Amended version September 2008). Brussel: Koning Boudewijnstichting (King Baudouin Association).

6 What volunteering programmes and plans are there in your country (national, regional, local)?

In Flanders, there are no national, regional or local level action plans focusing on volunteer work by young people in particular. However, Flemish authorities campaign for the promotion of volunteer work in Flanders in collaboration with the Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work) and the Provinciale Steunpunten (Provincial Support Centres). The not-for-profit organisation JINT is responsible for the European Youth Programme in Flanders. This is a European volunteer work component and involves information and promotion, allocation of funds and evaluation. To this end, JINT works together with the European Commission and agencies in 29 European countries.

<http://www.wvc.vlaanderen.be/vrijwilligers/vlaamsbeleid/index.htm>

<http://www.vrijwilligerweb.be>

<http://www.jint.be>

7 Does a strategy (plan) or specific measures for the development of voluntary activities of young people exist in your country?

One of the main accomplishments is the Act on the rights of volunteers (2005), as it provides volunteers with a proper legal position. The Act of 27/12/2005, containing various provisions, made substantial changes to the original Bill of 3 July 2005. This resulted in a consolidated version. The Act has been applicable since 1 August 2006. In order to promote co-operation between associations covering the different spheres of social life (including the youth sector) and the authorities, a Charter was signed between the Flemish government and the "Verenigde Verenigingen" (a partnership of a large number of associations). The Charter serves as a solid basis for developing cooperation

between associations of different spheres of social life and the authorities on the grounds of shared values and mutual respect. In 2007, an information campaign costing EUR 60,000 was launched to inform volunteers about the consequences of the federal Act for their activities. In addition, a project was set up in 2007 with the aim to provide clear information to volunteers with regard to their obligations of professional secrecy and client confidentiality.

Volunteer work for young people is encouraged by the Act of 14 February 2003, supporting and stimulating municipal, inter-municipal and provincial youth policy and youth work policy as amended by the Act of 23 December 2005 and the Act of 29 March 2002 on Flemish youth policy. These Acts stress the promotion of youth work, experiential projects and international youth work. On 16 December 2005, the Flemish government adopted the second Flemish Youth Policy Plan as proposed by the Minister for Youth. With regard to voluntary activities in youth work, the Youth Policy Plan contains the following objective: "The Flemish government encourages voluntary work in the youth sector." In order to facilitate voluntary work in a permanent and effective way, the Flemish government commits itself to the UN objectives with regard to voluntary work, these are included in the EU resolution from 14-02-2002 concerning the added value of youth voluntary work, approved under Belgian EU chairmanship. The European Union's aims in relation to voluntary work, including the aims that all levels of voluntary activities are developed, simplified, encouraged and recognised, were concretised by the Flemish government. The 2006-2010 Flemish Youth Policy Plan states that Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre) and other relevant actors pay attention to youth work in the framework of their mission with the aim of familiarising young people with voluntary work, providing them with information about concrete opportunities for performing voluntary work, giving them advice and promoting a positive image of voluntary work.

In the 2006-2010 Flemish Youth Policy Plan it is also stated that the Flemish government supports training opportunities for young volunteers and their mentors in order to improve the quality of voluntary activities and their organisational framework.

The necessary attention has also been paid to voluntary work within the Vilvoorde Pact. Objective 21 of the pact explicitly states: 'In 2010 more than one in two Flemings takes an active part in the social life'.

Research has shown that is important for the voluntary engagement of young people that volunteer work is tailored to personal interests. Unselfish commitment is not outmoded but young people also aim for a win-win relationship that turns their volunteer work into an opportunity to enhance their personality development. Young people want to engage in concrete, feasible actions rather than set themselves abstract or vague social goals. They want to make a clear-cut commitment. Simplicity, uniformity and transparency are the starting points.

8 Please, describe any obstacles faced by young people wishing to engage in volunteering in your country and which measures are being taken to remove them?

Obstacles:

- Due to increased legislation in various fields, it is becoming increasingly difficult to encourage young volunteers to different types of youth work. The legislator treats youth centres and youth associations on an equal basis as all kinds of commercial initiatives and in some cases they must meet the same conditions regarding environmental legislation, copyright, legislation on health and safety, as well as other detailed regulations.
- Due to the fact that training is not legally provided in all sectors, volunteer work often is not treated with the esteem it deserves. Social recognition is often linked to high quality training.
- The heavy demands placed on young people by education can be seen as an obstacle to their leisure time. Moreover, the available provision of volunteer work has to compete with various commercial leisure time activities.
- The knowledge of young people about volunteer work is often limited. The 'over-legalistic' approach to the legal status of volunteers does not provide any information about the social or social value of volunteering.
- People also think that the status of volunteers is mainly favourable to large, strongly organised bodies, thus leaving the reality of local youth work initiatives uncovered by law. Certain forms of voluntary engagement in society such as voluntary involvement in the neighbourhood, at work, ... are not recognised by this Act.

Measures which are being taken:

In recent years, the Flemish government has been devoting more attention to the quality of regulations and to limiting their number. In 2007 priority is given to the reduction, simplification and, in particular, to the improvement of the rules on associations and volunteers. In October 2006 the Flemish Minister for Administrative Simplification and Flemish Minister for Culture, Youth, Sports and Media, together with the cooperative partnership 'Verenigde Verenigingen' (a partnership of a large number of associations) launched the project 'Samen Vereenvoudigen voor vrijwilligers and verenigingen' (Simplification for volunteers and associations). All Flemings who are confronted, via their associations, with time consuming, unnecessary administrative procedures were invited to highlight the problems and, from within their role as experienced expert, also come up with practical solutions.

The campaign ran until the end of February 2007. The final report combined the reports received, an analysis of the issues, proposals for solutions and checks on progress.

The Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre) inventories federal, Flemish and Walloon forms of legislation, as well as good and bad examples of local regulations that generate restrictive or superfluous consequences for youth work. The Steunpunt Jeugd audits Flemish regulations and checks them on superfluous or strongly restrictive provisions. If possible, the Flemish government repeals or simplifies superfluous or strongly restrictive provisions and proposes alternatives where necessary. Within the framework of the volunteer statute, the Flemish Government, together with Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre), will inventory the various remaining issues concerning the volunteer statute (for youth volunteers, specifically) and press the federal government to find fully integrated solutions for these. The Flemish Government analyses the factors that lead to the exclusion of certain groups of young people from voluntary activities and is developing strategies for better involving these groups with voluntary activities, for example by ensuring that voluntary activities link to the interests of these groups of young people. Research will be conducted into the extent to which the recruitment of volunteers is affected by certain environmental factors such as the increasing numbers of rules, initiatives for encouraging student working, the commercialisation of the youngsters' environment and the renewal of examination procedures in higher education. The Vlaamse Jeugdraad stresses the fact that acts passed should cause as little administrative burden as possible.

9 How are young people's voluntary activities promoted in your country, particularly among young people with fewer opportunities? Please give an example of good practice if possible

The promotion of voluntary work (Volunteer's Week being the annual highlight) is one of the objectives of Vlaamse Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk. (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work). This is done by providing information and/or support to initiatives aimed at linking volunteer work to specific target groups, by cooperating in specific initiatives in which volunteers/voluntary activities play a special part and by managing www.vrijwilligerswerk.be in order to ensure the efficient use and maintenance of the database. Also, the Provincial Support Centres and the Brussels 'Punt' perform a key task in promoting volunteer work. The support centres have developed material that allows young people from the age of fifteen to get to know voluntary work: a brochure called 'Voluntary Work at School', a video called 'I do it voluntarily' and the game 'You're Welcome' (developed by the Centrum Informatieve Spelen [Centre for Informative Games]). Provincial youth services set up training programmes together with the provincial support centres for volunteer work.

- 'De Pluim' is an initiative involving the Koning Boudewijnstichting and the ten Flemish regional broadcasters. All those who involve themselves in an open and pleasant society can obtain a *feather in their cap*. On 8 September 2008, De Pluim (Feather) was launched for the fifth time.
- 'Kom uit uw Kot' is a campaign from the Verenigde Verenigingen, a partnership of hundreds of associations in Flanders, including a large number of youth associations. The campaign ran from 2005 to 2007 and was closed with the Day of Associations on 24-11-2007, when more than 75 associations gathering together. A steering committee for associations is currently working on a new project.
- The 'Vrijwilligersbeurs' (Volunteers' Fair) has been organised in recent years by a number of provinces. During such a fair, all volunteer organisations from the province introduce themselves to applicant volunteers.
- The 'Dag van de Jeugdbeweging' (Day of the youth movement) is a supportive initiative that focuses explicitly on young people and youth work. Both at provincial and local level, a large number of promotions are set up to focus on the power of the youth movement.
- 'Volunteers' Week' is an annual, recurring highlight for the promotion of voluntary work in Flanders. During this week, extra attention is paid to voluntary work and a seminar is organised to support this kind of work.

Word of mouth publicity is the most powerful means to attract young people. In addition, promotion is done at local level, in particular by the associations themselves, by means of flyers, posters, the holiday newspaper, the volunteer newspaper, signposting ...

The information is collected on the Internet at www.vrijwilligerswerk.be, from which various links are made to a number of organisations and informative sites on volunteer work (JINT, VIA,...). Initiatives that are specifically aimed at providing information for young people often also contain information on volunteer work. This concerns organisations such as the Youth Support Centre, the not-for-profit JINT, youth work organisations, Youth Information Point, ...

In addition, there are several sites that offer information on volunteer work: www.jeugdwerknet.be ; www.jips.be ; www.jongereninformatie.be ; www.jongerenplaneet.be

The Flemish Government's youth policy provides a framework to value (cultural) diversity. A number of initiatives are aimed at promoting the participation of young people from 'disadvantaged backgrounds' in youth work. In 2005, Steunpunt Jeugd together with the Youth and Sports Division gave an impetus to the cultural diversity process in the youth work sector. This led to the Flemish action plan on interculturalisation launched by Bert Anciaux in February 2006. In the Act of 29 March 2002 on Flemish Youth Policy, funding possibilities for experiential youth work were provided. The 'Act containing broad and stimulating measures for the encouragement of participation in culture, youth work and sports' from 2008, encourages people in poverty, people from ethnic/cultural diverse backgrounds,

those in detention, disabled people and families with young children to take part in the wealth of culture, sport and youth work that is on offer.

- The not-for-profit organisation 'Kif Kif' started an intercultural web radio, which is run by an intercultural group of volunteers. <http://www.kifkif.be/>

- The House of Colours from the non-profit Arnica is an intercultural youth association for young people who actively choose to support a multicultural society. Social art is used as a means to bring young people closer together. <http://www.arnica.be/>

- The non-profit Ethercentrum wants to build a radio centre where young people can attend radio workshops. Attention to immigrant newcomers is one of the spearheads of the project.

<http://www.radiocentrum.be/>

- The non-profit organisation Habbekrats is a training service for young people with difficult backgrounds. <http://www.habbekrats.be>

- The P&V Foundation is strongly focusing on facilitating access to youth work for various target groups. Late 2004, the P&V Foundation started the "Better together? Young people for accessible youth work!" project. "SPOT-ON! The Music Project – A Festive Youth Happening // 2008" is an offshoot of this. SPOT-ON!//2008 wishes to increase accessibility to local youth work for the so-called 'difficult to reach', socially vulnerable young people. <http://www.spot-on.be/pages/nl/foundation.html>

- In March 2006, Steunpunt Jeugd launched a new diversity campaign in collaboration with the "Impulsfonds voor het migrantenbeleid" (Incentive fund for migrant policy). In Flanders 'All different all the same' will be supported by two, fun mascots: Mie Bizar and Mo Bizar. Mie and Mo appeal to young people to respect 'that other person' and, therefore, also themselves. <http://www.allemaalanders.be>

The Flemish Support Centre also organises courses for trainers who wish to target specific target groups, specifically in the context of the subsidised project 'Fertility Management Program' which is running in 2008.

10 Explain how voluntary activities for young people are recognised in your country. Name certificates and other measures used for this purpose.

The five Provincial Support Centres, the Brussels Steunpunt (Support Centre) and the Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work) are responsible for the coordination and support of voluntary work in Flanders. These Support Centres also strive for a broader social – and formal – recognition of volunteer work.

Organisations working with volunteers usually provide a form of training, education or support for volunteers which may or may not lead to the award of a certificate. Although such certification is not legally recognised, these initiatives give an indication of the basic quality. The Vlaams Steunpunt

Vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work) initiated a project called 'Accreditation of experiential learning for management volunteers' in co-operation with SoCius, the Steunpunt voor Sociaal-cultureel werk (Support Centre for Socio-cultural work).

The Flemish government is also making efforts to better recognise voluntary activities and, therefore, value the social involvement of young volunteers and the skills they have acquired. The 2006-2010 Flemish Youth Policy Plan sets out the Flemish government's aims to ensure that voluntary involvement is accredited by different actors at all levels (government, business, social partners, the civil society and young people themselves). Accreditation must be proportionate to the voluntary activities accomplished. The Flemish government examines the ways in which the accreditation projects are useful and viable. (A Flemish initiative, for example, is the Wacker project in which several organisations (VFJ, JES, non-profit Kids among others) collaborate. They study how their operation can be translated into competencies and how they can be involved in the centres for youth skills and development of the city. Flanders is co-organiser of three European developments, viz. the development of the *European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers*, the development of the *Europass* project, based on the EU resolution on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning and the *Youth Pass*.

The Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk aims for increased societal recognition of voluntary work in Flanders, for instance by means of promoting the quality of volunteer work and defending the interests of voluntary workers.

Each year, there is a Volunteer Week. In 2009, this week has been organised from 1 to 8 March.

The Flemish government also presents the Volunteer of the Year Award in the cultural sector.

11 Which collaborations, networks and exchange programmes for supporting the voluntary activities of young people exist in your country ?

Collaborations and networks in favour of young people's voluntary activities:

The not-for-profit organisation JINT is the coordination body for international youth work and the National Agency for the entire European 'Youth' Programme in Flanders. It is an important contact point for the EVS (European Voluntary Service), for volunteers as well as for organisations. You can turn to the Agency for information on EVS such as criteria, forms, social security,... and also for advice and monitoring at all stages of your project. JINT also sets up training programmes for volunteers and participating organisations.

'Het Punt' in Brussels and the not-for-profit Vlaams Steunpunt vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work) are both members of The European Volunteer Centre. EVC is a European network of 67 mainly national and regional volunteer centres and volunteer development agencies

across Europe, that together work to support and promote voluntary activity. The key objectives of EVC are: give a clear voice to volunteer work in Europe, reinforce the infrastructure for volunteering in Europe, encourage volunteer work and make it more effective.

The main goal of the Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk is to stimulate and support voluntary activities as well as to promote interests. The Vlaams Steunpunt monitors the interests of volunteer work, e.g. by monitoring policy developments. Also cross-sector networking is a key cornerstone.

Exchange of information, experience and good practice:

The Prince Philip Foundation is a major actor in the field of exchanges and the permanent dialogue between the different Communities in Belgium (the Flemish Community, the French-speaking Community and the German-speaking Community). The Prince Philip Fund offers financial support to exchange projects which cross language barriers in our country and which encourage cooperation between schools, colleges and universities. It also supports exchange projects between institutions and associations and encourages contacts between people. It also fulfils the role of meeting platform between the Municipalities and helps develop original and specific initiatives. One of these specific initiatives is Belgodysee, a collaboration between Radio 2, Vivacité, the Prince Philip Fund and N.V. Moulinsart. It gives journalism students between the age of 20 and 25 the opportunity to make reports in pairs (one Dutch speaking member and one French speaking member). In 2008 the theme was the world of TinTin.

Contact information: Prins Filipfonds, p.a. Koning Boudewijnstichting, Brederodestraat 21, 1000 Brussel. Tel: +32 2 549 61 91. Fax +32 2 512 32 49. website: <http://www.prins-filipfonds.org> . e-mail: info@prins-filipfonds.org

The Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk, the Provincial Support Centres and 'Het Punt' (Brussels) are responsible for the exchange of information and experiences within volunteer work, e.g. by means of training and a joint website www.vrijwilligerswerk.be .

Exchange of young volunteers:

In Flanders, young volunteers can apply to a broad range of organisations for international exchanges and short-term or long-term projects: AFS, ATD vierde wereld, Balkanactie, Bouworde, Damiaanactie, JNM (youth association for nature and environmental protection), Natuur 2000, Tierra, VIA, WEP, Broederlijk Delen, Jeugddienst Don Bosco, Jint (the EVS programme). The projects focus on social, ecological and/or educational issues. Most projects are oriented towards young people from the age of 18.

Contact information: Jint vzw, Grétrystraat 26, 1000 Brussel. Tel: +32 2 209 07 20. Fax +32 2 209 07 49. website: <http://www.jint.be> , e-mail: jint@jint.be

Each year, the European Voluntary Service offers 3500 young people from 31 European and third world countries the opportunity to act as volunteers in many areas. It is a high quality model for

transnational voluntary services that aims at developing the feeling of solidarity in young people, reinforcing their citizenship and mutual understanding.

Sources :

<http://www.jint.be>

12 Do collective volunteering projects exist in your country?

Collective volunteering projects are: Bouworde vzw, Jeugdbond voor Natuurstudie en Milieubescherming (JNM), ATD Vierde Wereld België, Natuur 2000, Joka, AFS, Interculturele Programma's vzw (Intercultural Programmes non-profit organisation), Balkanactie, Damiaanactie, Tierra, VIA, WEP (World Education Program), Broederlijk Delen, Jeugddienst Don Bosco.

The not-for-profit organisation 'Bouworde' organises camps in Flanders involving about ten volunteers each time. These mainly take place in the summer months (July, August and September). More information on the different projects can be found at <http://www.bouworde.be> .

JNM is an organisation for and by young people between the ages of 8 and 25 who take an interest in nature and the environment. During the summer holidays, they organise different types of camps for young people from 16 to 25, including nature study, work, work study and environmental camps. More information at <http://www.jnm.be/kampen/>

"ATD Vierde wereld (persons living in poverty) België" organises summer holiday camps and works on a shared future in Brussels and the Walloon Region. More information on dates and venue at <http://www.atd-vierdewereld.be/>

Natuur 2000 scheduled a nature camp at Oelegem from 4 to 9 August 2008 for 14 to 25 year-olds. More information at <http://www.natuur2000.be>

Joka is the youth work element of the Present non-profit organisation which organises voluntary work in facilities for the elderly, psychiatric centres and facilities for disabled people. Annually, about 50 camps take place for young people from the age of 16 during the Easter holidays and during the summer months and this involves about 300 participants and around 10,000 residents of institutions. More information can be found at <http://www.jokaweb.be>

AFS Intercultural Programmes non-profit organisation is the biggest exchange organisation in Flanders and is recognised by the Flemish Community. Within its international network of 53 independent partner organisations, the AFS sends and welcomes 13,000 young people to and from all corners of the globe (represented in 52 countries) each year. More information can be found at <http://www.afsvlaanderen.be>

Damiaanactie non-profit organisation is an international aid organisation that is primarily involved with caring for victims of 2 poverty related illnesses; leprosy and [tuberculoses](#). Damiaanactie offers

opportunities to young volunteers and organises building camps in India and Bangladesh. More information can be found at <http://www.damiaanactie.be>

Tierra c.v.b.a. provides active nature trips for 'Ecovolunteers'. More information can be found at <http://www.tierra.be> and <http://www.ecovolunteer.be>

VIA 'Interculturele Uitwisseling via vrijwilligerswerk' (Intercultural Exchange via Voluntary Work) is the Flemish branch of two worldwide networks in which international solidarity is central:

Service Civil International (SCI) and International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE). VIA organises work camps and other projects abroad. More information can be found at <http://www.viavzw.be/static/>

WEP (World Education Program) is

Broederlijk Delen offers opportunities for young volunteers, both in Flanders and in the South. Broederlijk Delen organises camps in Senegal where Flemish young people can live and work with Senegalese young people for three weeks and experience life over there. More information can be found at <http://www.broederlijkdelen.be> and <http://www.kabaal.be/jongeren>

Jeugddienst Don Bosco provides children and young people between the ages of 6 and 30 with voluntary activities in Belgium and abroad, provides motivation and voluntary work in playgrounds or at camps.

More information can be found at http://www.jeugddienstdonbosco.be/donbosco/pbl/pag/db_index.jsp

The Flemish Community set up the not-for-profit JINT as a coordinating body for international youth work. In order to "promote the active participation of the Flemish Community in international youth exchanges and international youth policy" the Flemish government opted for a strategic alliance with the youth work sector. In practice, the emphasis is on the European programmes under the impulse of the European dynamics in the field of international youth mobility. But from the start, they adopted the fundamental principle of looking towards the rest of the world.

13 Which recent survey or research has been carried out on the topic of voluntary activities?

Voluntary work is one of the researched topics in the following studies:

- Hoger Instituut voor de Arbeid & Centre d'Economie Sociale (Higher Institute for Work and Centre for Economy) (2007). Measuring voluntary work in Belgium. Critical analysis of statistical sources in relation to voluntary work in Belgium. Brussels: Koning Boudewijnstichting (King Baudouin Association).
- De Groof, S., Elchardus, M., Laurijssen, I., Smits, W. & Stevens, F. (2006). Het spanningsveld tussen het vrijwilligerswerk in het jeugdwerk en de commercialisering van de leefwereld van jongeren. [The field of tension between voluntary work in youth work and the commercialisation of the young

people' environment.] Literature study and secondary analysis. Study on behalf of the Policy Branch of the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media of the Flemish Community. Brussels: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Sociology group, TOR Research group.

- Stevens, F., De Groof, S., Elchardus, M., Laurijssen, I. & Smits, W. (2006). Het spanningsveld tussen vrijwilligerswerk in het jeugdwerk en de commercialisering van de leefwereld van jongeren. [The field of tension between voluntary work in youth work and the commercialisation of the young people' environment.] New analysis. Study on behalf of the Policy Branch of the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media of the Flemish Community. Brussels: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Sociology group, TOR Research group.

- Verschelden, G., Vanthuyne, T., Larock, Y., Franckx, C. & Verhoeven, S. (2005). Eindrapport onderzoeksproject participatie in verenigingen. Brussels-Ghent: Socius

- Smits, W. (2004). Maatschappelijke participatie van jongeren. [Social participation of young people.] Movement in the social, free-time and cultural space. Final report of the Programme of Policy focused Research 'Social Participation of young people' on behalf of the Administration Culture, Department of Youth and Sports of the Flemish Community. Brussels: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, TOR group.

- Smits, W. (2004). Participatie en onbehagen. [Participation and Discontent] Brussels: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, TORgroup.

- Bouverne-De Bie, M. & Verschelden, G. (2003). Vrijwilligerswerk: een verscheidenheid van realiteiten. [Voluntary Work: a variety of realities]

-Universiteit Gent, Vakgroep Sociale Agogiek.

'Volunteer work' is one of the themes that is also regularly investigated in the annual survey of the Planning and Statistics Administration of the Flemish Community.

Research (relatively little) on youth voluntary work in Flanders is linked to the concern over the decrease in the degree of activity or, in a broader sense, the involvement of volunteers. Generally it can be stated that the discussion about young people and voluntary work in surveys is much more a discussion about the *volunteer* than about the significance and contribution of voluntary *work* in youth work in particular and welfare work in general. Research into the importance of voluntary work in youth work should be linked to the concrete context (the work) in which volunteers are deployed and to the question about the added value of this input.