

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH WORK IN BELGIUM (FLANDERS)



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1. Context of youth work

Filip Coussée has written a chapter in the *History of youth work* series:

Coussée F. (2009), "Youth work and its forgotten history: a view from Flanders", in G. Verschelden, F. Coussée, T. Van de Walle and H. Williamson (eds), *The history of youth work in Europe and its relevance for youth policy today* (pp. 41-56), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Filip Coussée and Guy Redig have also written a chapter in the Youth Knowledge Books:

Redig G. and Coussée F. (2017), "Youth work in Flanders – Playful usefulness and useful playfulness", in H. Schild, N. Connolly, F. Labadie, J. Vanhee and H. Williamson (eds), *Thinking seriously about youth work* (pp. 27-39), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

We cite a part of the chapter "Youth work and its forgotten history: a view from Flanders" (Coussée 2009, pp. 42-43):

From 1945 on, the government started to build a national youth policy in Belgium. A central place in this policy was allocated to youth work, more particularly to the youth movement. After the Second World War, the popularity of youth movements declined in most European countries. This was not the case in Flanders, for the government put the youth movement at the heart of its youth policy. [...] The youth movements were at that time among the most attractive leisure activities. They were well-known and eye-catching. [...] They were tightly integrated in their mother organisations, and their leaders had a fairly big influence on policymakers. The existing youth organisations, mainly Catholic, wanted the government not to set up new forms of youth work or its own youth organisations, but instead explicitly to orient "unattached young people" to the youth movements. It fully responded to their wishes.

The government recognised some other, more specific youth organisations and clubs, but it classified these youth work forms as "support services for social, technical or civic education". They were supposed to refer their clients to the youth movements for "further harmonious education" (Deshormes 1953). Even the fresh air cures of the health insurance organisations were incited to win souls for the youth movement. Government did not interfere in the content of youth work practice. Therefore, Flemish youth policy was called neutral and a-pedagogical (Collard 1957, Peeters 1974). The question of what youth work is or can be, given the specific conditions in which different young people grow up, was left aside.

By the end of the 1950s, the conviction gained ground that the youth movement could not grow into a mass movement. The format was considered "too demanding". Nevertheless, the government still had confidence in it. Existing youth movements developed new forms of work to attract unattached young people. Supported by policymakers and academics, the youth movement considered itself as the crux around which new forms of open youth work would take shape (Peeters 1963, Cammaer et al. 1967). However, the profile of the group reached by youth movements did not change a lot. Insofar as the new forms of youth work reached some of the unattached young people, they did not succeed in moving them on to the youth movement. At that time the national chaplain of Chiro launched his teabag metaphor. Members of Chiro should function as a teabag in the water and spread their beneficial influence to the masses. Cardijn, the founder of Christian Workers Youth, used a similar metaphor. He spoke about "the yeast and the bread".

Nevertheless, inspired by British and Dutch examples, open youth work gained ground. Particularly in the bigger cities this happened increasingly without interference from the youth movement. Stimulated by a certain moral panic, local government started to focus more specifically on unattached, workless youth. Open youth work grew into an established youth work form. Thus youth work participation rates increased, but the politics of moving on (catching the unattached and guiding them into the youth movement) did not work.

Rather we saw the development of two kinds of open youth work: work with middle-class youth (often young people who grew too old for the youth movement) and work with particular target groups (jobless youth and later immigrant and underprivileged youth). These work forms soon started to employ professional youth workers. One could observe a growing gap between “general youth work” (working with middle-class children and young people, offering them meaningful leisure activities) and “specific youth work” (working with target groups, offering additional or compensatory educational support). For this kind of youth work, the gap between the life world of these groups of young people and the life world of the youth workers legitimised the professionalization of youth work.

Broadly this is the situation today. Flanders has a high “youth work index”. For every 250 young people there is a youth work initiative. There are many work forms, but the distinction between the general youth work and specific youth work has remained. The former is labelled traditional or classic youth work; the latter is called “youth social work”.

Thus, during the last decades youth work has remained important in Flanders. Young people have a strong need to organise themselves but also the Flemish Government and society recognises the important role of youth work. Flanders’ youth work history, and particularly youth movements, has made its mark on the contemporary Flemish youth work resulting in a strong focus on leisure and recreation. From a historical point of view, Flanders has always focused on youth work as an emancipatory and empowerment instrument for young people rather than an instrument for prevention.

Sources:

Bradt L. (2017), *Questionnaire mapping educational and career paths of youth workers in Europe*.

Coussée F. (2009), “Youth work and its forgotten history: a view from Flanders”, in G. Verschelden, F. Coussée, T. Van de Walle and H. Williamson (eds), *The history of youth work in Europe and its relevance for youth policy today* (pp. 41-56), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

Redig G. and Coussée F. (2017), “Youth work in Flanders – Playful usefulness and useful playfulness”, in H. Schild, N. Connolly, F. Labadie, J. Vanhee and H. Williamson (eds), *Thinking seriously about youth work* (pp. 27-39), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

What is the context in which youth work happens in your country today, what is on the public policy agenda in general that may affect young people and youth policy?

The Flemish youth work policy is part of the “general” youth policy.

Youth policy and related government measures are based on a planned, comprehensive and integrated vision of youth. The various elements in this definition are significant. Youth policy refers to an interrelated body of elements set in a time perspective. It covers elements from every sphere of life deemed important for young people, in a coherent way. Youth policy is embedded in a model of society which expresses the desirable situation for young people (both as individuals and in terms of their group development), how they are expected to grow up and develop and the place they have in society.

Youth policy is implemented through explicit measures: the specific actions undertaken by the government focusing on a particular category of the population: “youth”. For the Flemish Community, this means approximately the age group between 0 and 30 years old, although different definitions are used in specific contexts (“Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 concerning a renewed youth and children's rights policy”, 7 March 2012).

Youth policy is based on the assumption that it is possible to implement a group policy. This is not self-evident, because the government applies a sectoral approach in most other domains. A group policy is a different way of implementing policy: instead of focusing on one sector, the starting point is young people's lives across the board, their needs and requirements. That is why youth policy permeates almost every other policy sector.

A group-oriented implementation of policy creates a number of policy crossroads, where it encounters sectoral policies. Youth policy is based on an interactive, participatory style of government and a comprehensive or inclusive approach to policy. This makes youth policy a special and supplementary policy. It provides many opportunities for a more democratic and improved governance of policy implementation.

In the frame of a programme for “Better Administrative Policy” the Flemish public administration was subjected to a reform in 2006 (Flemish Government, no date). This programme was designed to make the public administration more efficient, to make Flanders a place where people enjoy working and living.

The tasks of the Flemish public administration are now organised on the basis of 11 policy areas. Each policy area is supported by a civil service department and a number of autonomous agencies. The departments support and advise the government on policy making, whereas the agencies apply the policy through services to citizens, companies and organisations. These agencies operate with a large degree of autonomy depending on their terms of reference.

One of these policy areas is “Culture, Youth, and Media”.

The Division of Youth within the Department of Culture, Youth and Media is responsible for implementing the youth and children’s rights policy of the Flemish Government. It promotes and stimulates a rich and various offer of non-profit socio-cultural activities for children and young people between 3 and 30 years old. It provides operational subventions and project grants to youth organisations, it supports and guides local authorities in developing their own local youth policy. Furthermore, it plays a co-ordinating role in developing the Flemish youth and children’s rights policy plan and in monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in all Flemish policy domains. It also closely observes international youth policy by its presence at many bi- and multilateral forums. Finally, it is responsible for managing the camping equipment lending service.

Source: www.cjism.be

However, youth work in Flanders mainly takes place in the local context. Organisations and youth work activities operate at a local level and receive funding (or are organised) by the municipalities. Youth organisations play an important role in the implementation of Flanders’ youth policy. Dozens of accredited youth organisations are active at Flemish level dedicated to youth work and young people in many different ways in a leisure-time setting.

Since the Flemish Parliament Act on local and provincial youth (work) policy came into force in 1993, steps were taken towards a decentralised and complementary youth policy. Since 2016, the municipalities are no longer granted funding that is specifically meant for youth policy. The funds are integrated in one overarching provision to local governments (Community Fund (*Gemeentefonds*)). The aim was to increase the integration of policy making across different sectors. It also strengthened the autonomous authority of the municipalities concerning youth policy.

The public policy agenda in general that may affect young people and youth policy

Based on the Flemish Youth and Children’s Rights Policy Plan (2015-2019) (Department for Culture, Youth and Media, no date), we illustrate the main topics that Flanders wants to address. The Flemish Youth and Children’s Rights Policy Plan outlines all the concerns regarding children and young people and their rights which the Flemish ministers will pay attention to in their policies in the coming years. The plan pursues four large societal objectives: (1) equal opportunities, (2) broad development, (3) space

and (4) greater involvement in society for all children and young people. There are 10 selected themes to arrive at strategic and operational objectives on the basis of priority policy challenges. These themes are: poverty, ecology, being young, mobility, education, space, well-being, housing, employment and youth culture.

Brief discussion of some important challenges:

- **Poverty:** Concretely this is about bridging the gap by promoting a decent standard of living and by facilitating a pleasant and useful pursuit of leisure time. Particular attention is also paid to schools.
- **Sustainability:** Concerns reducing the ecological footprint by making deliberate choices, and being able to really make choices in a healthy living environment.
- **Being young:** Children and young people should naturally be given a place.
- **Mobility:** Children and young people should be able to travel around safely with no worries.
- **Education:** Schools have to become a place where children and youngsters can feel at home, even outside school hours. Also, pupils should be put at centre stage and should be able to make positive and informed choices for their future.
- **Participation:** Children and young people will be given a voice in policy decisions that affect them.
- **Cultural education:** There must be music, theatre and art for and by young people.
- **Employment:** More young people should be at work.
- **Housing:** All children and young people should have a decent roof over their heads.
- **Well-being:** All children and young people should know who they can turn to whenever they need someone to talk to.
- **Space:** There is room for everyone on streets and squares.

Sources:

Van der Eecken A., Kemper R. and Bradt L. (2016), *Country Sheet on youth policy in Flanders*, retrieved from <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/9038134/Flanders-Country-Sheet-2016.pdf/67a6a22b-0b36-48d4-966c-d2098f5d3188>

Flemish Youth and Children's Rights Policy Plan 2015-2019, retrieved from http://www.jkp.vlaanderen/assets/downloads/JKP_summary_digital_version.pdf

2. Strategic and legislative framework of youth work

Since 1 January 2013, the Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on a revised youth and children's rights policy (*Decreet houdende vernieuwd jeugd en kinderechtenbeleid*) as amended, has come into force. This Act describes the basic instruments to implement youth policy and specifies the conditions for accreditation and funding of a large number of private organisations and youth-related associations operating on a Flemish level (i.e. not organisations operating on a regional or a local level as these receive funding by the municipalities).

Definitions according to the Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on revised youth and children's rights:

- youth work: socio-cultural work based on non-commercial purposes by or for young people of 3 to 30 years, during leisure time, with educational guidance and to promote the general and integral development of the young people who participate in it on a voluntarily basis;
- youth worker: any person who takes responsibility in youth work and who has verifiable experience, or makes efforts in the area of education and training in relation to youth (work).

"Youth work" and "youth worker" are not defined or included in any other legislation or national policy document.

The Flemish Parliament Acts are published in Dutch (original language) and a French translation in the Belgian Bulletin of Acts, Orders and Decrees: www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/doc/rech_f.htm. The Division Youth of the Agency for Socio-Cultural Work for Youth and Adults can provide an English version of the Flemish Parliament Acts on demand.

Sources:

Bradt L. (2017), *Questionnaire mapping educational and career paths of youth workers in Europe*.

http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/regelgeving_VJKB/BVR_decreet_vernieuwdJKRB_def_goedkeuring_VR.pdf

How do youth workers themselves define youth work in your country/what do they understand by it?

How youth workers define youth work depends heavily on the youth work context. The Ambrassade, an organisation that supports the recognised youth work organisations, asked 100 youth workers how they defined "youth work" and they received 100 different answers. This illustrates the diversity of Flemish youth work.

Source: <https://ambrassade.be/eng>

3. Recognition

According to the definition of [recognition](#) there is **self, social, formal and political recognition** of youth work and of youth workers (professionals or volunteers). What is the situation in your country on these different dimensions of recognition of youth work?

The Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on a renewed Flemish policy on youth and children's rights includes the legislation about the training programme "Kadervorming".

All four dimensions are present in this legislation:

- Formal recognition: a certificate is delivered.
- Political recognition: non-formal education is recognised in legislation.

- Social recognition: social actors such as the youth sector and local authorities acknowledge the certificates.
- Self-recognition: the training programme (“Kadervorming”) contributes to participants’ awareness of their competences.

Source: <http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/regelgeving/attestenieugdwerkers.aspx>

Is there any formal validation system of non-formal education and learning in youth work contexts implemented in your country?

Formal and accredited courses in youth work

In Flanders, there is no separate educational pathway for youth workers. “Youth work” as such is not an officially recognised profession and therefore no targeted youth work training programmes and qualifications exist. However, most youth workers are trained via other professions such as socio-cultural worker (as part of the wider social work bachelor study programme) or pedagogy. Youth workers also have other educational backgrounds, mainly due to the non-existence of a youth worker qualification.

Non-formal education/training for youth workers

Although formal youth worker qualifications do not exist, youth workers, both professional staff and volunteers, can obtain youth worker certificates. The certificates are awarded by the Department of Culture, Youth and Media after completion of an approved training programme (“Kadervorming”). “Kadervorming” specifies the competences the young people have to acquire during a course/internship and results in a certificate. Both the trajectories and competences are incorporated in a parliamentary act and decision.

Source: http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/kadervorming_regelgeving.aspx

Besides these certificates of training programmes (“Kadervorming”), there are also other training mechanisms, such as a tailor-made training course of one day, congresses, etc.

The following types of youth worker certificates are awarded by the department:

- Animator: the animator training programme aims to train candidates in supporting young people in youth work. The programme focuses on developing understanding, attitudes and skills necessary to work with young people. It is based on a theoretical part (participation (50 hours) in a recognised training programme) and a practical part (50 hours’ internship). There is also an evaluation process of 4 hours.
- Senior animator: the senior animator training programme aims to further train candidates in supporting young people in youth work and to take up responsibilities within a coaching team. The programme focuses on strengthening the understanding, attitudes and skills necessary to work with young people. It is based on a theoretical part and a practical part.
- Instructor: the instructor training programme aims to develop participants in taking up responsibilities in youth organisations. The programme focuses on developing an understanding and skills in group dynamics, in communication skills and conflict management. It comprises a theoretical part (50 hours) and a practical part (50 hours’ internship). There is also an evaluation process of 4 hours.

Furthermore, there is the initiative “Oscar” in the non-formal education sector. The Flemish Government supports the initiative “Oscar” of Socius. It is an online portfolio to recognise the competences of voluntary youth workers. “Oscar” gives an overview of competences young people can achieve. Young people gain these competences through (voluntary) youth work or a specific training initiative. The youth organisations where young people worked as a volunteer or did a specific training provide a document (online) with the competences young people gained.

Source:

Bradt L. (2017). *Questionnaire mapping educational and career paths of youth workers in Europe.*

If there is a legal framework for the profession of youth work per se or embedded in other fields, please explain briefly and reference it.

There is no legal or regulatory authority for youth work as a profession. The Department of Culture, Youth and Media stimulates and supports a rich and varied offer of non-commercial socio-cultural activities for young people, mainly through subsidies to organisations on the national and regional levels.

Source:

Bradt L. (2017). *Questionnaire mapping educational and career paths of youth workers in Europe.*

Is your country involved in any European or applying any national initiatives to support youth work (for example, Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio, Council of Europe quality label for youth centres, Erasmus + Youthpass, European Youth Capitals, Youth Friendly Cities, others)?

“Kadervorming” is a certified training explicitly meant for youngsters who (will) have leadership responsibilities in the context of youth work. The main goal is to strengthen their competences. One trajectory consists of a theoretical part, an internship and an evaluation. The training may lead to a certificate (animator, chief instructor) delivered by the Division Youth.

The Government of Flanders will further support the initiative “Oscar”, an online portfolio to recognise the competences of young volunteers. “Oscar” gives an overview of competences young people can achieve. Young people gain these competences through (voluntary) youth work or a specific training initiative. Several (youth) organisations where young people worked as a volunteer or did a specific training, provide a document (online) with the competences young people gained.

Source:

Bradt L. (2017), *Questionnaire mapping educational and career paths of youth workers in Europe.*

4. Funding youth work

Legislation

In the Flemish community the Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on a revised youth and children's rights policy as amended, came into force on 1 January 2013. This Act specifies the conditions for accreditation and funding of a large number of private organisations and youth-related associations operating at a Flemish level (i.e. not organisations operating at a regional or a local level as these receive funding by the municipalities).

Since the Flemish Parliament Act on local and provincial youth (work) policy came into force in 1993, steps were taken towards a decentralised and complementary youth policy. Since 2016, the municipalities are no longer granted funding that is specifically meant for youth policy. The funds are integrated in one overarching provision to local governments (Community Fund (*Gemeentefonds*)). The aim was to increase the integration of policy making across different sectors. It also strengthened the autonomous authority of the municipalities concerning youth policy.

From 2018, the person-oriented responsibilities will be transferred to the local and regional levels. Transitional measures are foreseen for 2018 and 2019. From 2020 a Parliament Act to support regional youth work will enter into force.

The Flemish Parliament Acts are published in Dutch (original language) and a French translation in the Belgian Bulletin of Acts, Orders and Decrees: www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/doc/rech_f.htm

Every year, the Government of Flanders estimates the budget for the next year. This budget allocation is presented to the Flemish Parliament and is discussed in parliamentary committees. The Flemish Parliament has to accept the budget allocation before the Flemish Government can use the budget for expenditure. This budget allocation also contains the means for youth policy.

How youth policy is funded

The budget in 2015

In 2015, the Division Youth had a budget of €67 500 000 to achieve its objectives. Most of the money was allocated to the Act on local and provincial youth policy (18 877 000) and the Act on the Flemish policy on youth and children's rights (€32 610 000). The local and regional levels have their own budget, next to the subventions of the Flemish Government.

The budget in 2016

In 2016, the budget of the Division Youth was €42 266 000. There was a decline from the budget allocation of 2015. The budget allocated to the Act on local and provincial youth policy had been reduced

compared to the budget allocation of 2015. The remaining budget (€1 254 000) would help support youth policy in Brussels and De Rand (“the rim”). In 2016, the budget allocated to the Act on the Flemish policy on youth and children’s rights was €32 509 000 and had been reduced by €21 000.

The budget in 2017

In 2017, the budget allocation to the Division Youth is €42 462 000. The budget allocated to the Act on the Flemish policy on youth and children’s rights has risen to €33 037 000.

What is funded?

Parliament acts define the instruments of youth and children’s rights policy and the funding of local and provincial authorities and youth organisations. The Act on Flemish Youth and Children’s Rights Policy defines instances of youth work and recognises institutions and organisations involved with young people and also children’s rights policy, defining at the same time the allocation of finances within the system.

Since 2015 the Division Youth has also subsidised youth houses. Youth houses are open and informal meeting places for young people. They reach thousands of young people and volunteers every week. In almost every Flemish municipality there is a youth house.

Youth houses can contribute to several Flemish policy objectives. For example, youth houses contribute to young people’s social, cultural and educative development and offer opportunities to work on issues such as diversity, youth culture, vulnerable young people, creativity and enterprise. On 19 June 2013, the Flemish Parliament asked the Flemish Government to acknowledge youth houses as anchor points in local communities and to see them as partners in working on such issues.

The subsidy scheme for supra-local projects has been developed by the Flemish Government to respond to changes in the youth house sector and to stimulate creativity and innovation. Youth houses that fulfil the conditions can receive funding for the implementation of:

- a supra-local project to stimulate young people’s artistic expression
- a supra-local project to promote young people’s entrepreneurship

Each project can receive a staff grant of up to €40 000 and an operating grant of up to €5 000.

Source: http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/jeugdhuizen_gesubsidieerd.aspx

Recent developments

Since the Flemish Parliament Act on local and provincial youth (work) policy came into force in 1993, steps have been taken towards a decentralised and complementary youth policy. Since 2016, the municipalities are no longer granted funding that is specifically meant for youth policy. The funds are inte-

grated in one overarching provision to local governments (Community Fund (*Gemeentefonds*)). The aim was to increase the integration of policy making across different sectors. It also strengthened the autonomous authority of the municipalities concerning youth policy.

On 9 December 2016 the Flemish Government accepted a new executive order for the Parliament Act on local youth policy, after a recommendation of the SARC, the Flemish Youth Council and the State Council. More concretely, the executive order combines the provisions set out in two existing executive orders and ensures the further development of decretal rules that were maintained after the changes to the Parliament Act (3 July 2015 and 20 May 2016).

The executive order does not contain substantive changes and does not imply changes in procedure. Only in the article about the criteria for the Prize Youth Municipality of Flanders are there some substantive changes, to better meet the intentions of the policy paper on Youth.

Sources:

http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/regelgeving_lokaal/2016_nieuwUB_decreet_lokaal_jeugdbeleid_definitief.pdf

http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/regelgeving_lokaal/2016_nieuwUB_decreet_lokaal_jeugdbeleid_toelichting.pdf

Explanation:

The Parliament Act of 3 July 2015 arranges the integration of sectoral means for local authorities in the Community Fund (*Gemeentefonds*). Consequently, a separate decretal legislation was no longer needed for the allocation of means for the support of the municipal youth policy on the basis of the Flemish policy priorities. An exception was the six municipalities with (linguistic) facilities of the Flemish periphery of Brussels and the Flemish Community commission. For them, it remained unchanged. The provision with regard to the local youth council has changed very little. Also the allocation of the Prize Youth Municipality of Flanders was maintained.

The Parliament Act of 20 May 2016 adapted the modalities for measuring the means for the peripheral municipalities and the Flemish Community commission to the new reality. One of the Flemish policy priorities was also deleted for the peripheral municipalities.

The new executive order brings the provisions of two existing executive orders together and adapts them to the decretal changes of 2015 and 2016.

16 November 2015: Parliament Act downsizing the provinces, accepted by the Flemish Parliament.

On 9 November, the Flemish Parliament accepted the “Parliament Act concerning the renewed mandate and changed funding of the provinces”. This Parliament Act arranges the downsizing of provincial authorities from 1 January 2018. The person-oriented matters – and its means, staff and infrastructure – will be transferred to the Flemish Government and the local authorities. The Parliament Act also changes the funding of the provinces.

With this Parliament Act the Flemish Government wants to implement the coalition agreement as well as contribute to a more streamlined administrative organisation in Flanders. From 2018, only two levels of government will be responsible for person-oriented matters: (1) the Flemish Government for the provision of the general framework; and (2) the local authorities (close to the citizens) for the local policy. Thus strong local authorities with more responsibilities and administrative efficiency as well as a framework-setting government is central here. The downsized provincial level will only be concerned with land-related matters.

This Parliament Act also changes the “Parliament Act of 6 July 2012 concerning the support and promotion of local youth policy and the provision of provincial youth work policy”. All provisions that refer to provincial responsibilities are deleted.

Sources:

<http://docs.vlaamsparlement.be/docs/stukken/2015-2016/g880-3.pdf>

<http://docs.vlaamsparlement.be/docs/stukken/2015-2016/g880-2.pdf>

Parliament Act supra-local youth work, youth houses and targeted youth work.

On 27 October, the Flemish Government accepted the draft “Parliament Act supra-local youth work, youth houses and targeted youth work”. The Parliament Act stipulates that from 2020, youth work that is not directed at the whole Flemish community but that does respond to Flemish Government priorities will be supported. The Parliament Act brings together different subsidy channels and supports youth work that is focused on the realisation of youth work for all young people. Thereby, attention was paid to recommendations of the Council for Culture, Youth and Media, the Flemish Youth Council, the social partners and the State Council. The draft will be submitted to the Flemish Parliament.

Sources:

http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/regelgeving_bovenlokaal/20171027_decreet-bovenlokaal_def.pdf

http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/regelgeving_bovenlokaal/20171027_decreet-bovenlokaal_memorie.pdf

The Parliament Act brings together different subsidy channels and is targeted at four groups:

- professional youth houses that are focused on the Flemish youth policy priorities
- professional youth work with vulnerable children and young people
- supra-local youth work with children and young people with a disability
- inter-municipal co-operation that stimulates co-operation and networking between the local authorities and youth associations.

The support of supra-local youth work with children and young people with a disability and of inter-municipal co-operation are new tasks of the Flemish Government, given the new tasks assigned to the provinces.

Main aspects

The main aspects of the Parliament Act are:

- a multi-annual structural support for associations that anticipate the priorities of the Flemish youth policy or that develop a supra-local activity
- project funds that provide associations with opportunities to correspond to new developments
- limiting the administrative work for the initiators
- conducting a complementary policy in respect to the local authorities.

Timing

The Parliament Act will enter into force in different stages. For the subsidy channel “supra-local youth work with children and young people with a disability”, transitional measures will be foreseen in 2018 and 2019 and the funding on the basis of this Parliament Act will start at 1 January 2020. For the subsidy channel about inter-municipal co-operation, transitional measures will be foreseen and the funding on the basis of this Parliament Act will start on 1 January 2021.

Financial accountability

Youth organisations play an important role in the implementation of Flanders’ youth policy. Youth organisations or youth associations usually receive funding based on specific funding regulations or grant schemes. The criteria for types of organisations funded is described in the Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012:

- nationally organised youth associations
- associations for participation and information
- cultural education associations.

Youth organisations or youth associations receiving an operational grant on the basis of the Flemish Parliament Act of 11 January 2012 on “conducting a renewed policy on youth and children’s rights” need to submit a financial report and a report of an independent auditor, who is a member of the Institute of Auditors, to the Flemish administration every year. The date and formal requirements of the reports are defined by the Flemish Government.

Use of EU Funds

The Flemish Youth and Children’s rights Policy Plan does not (directly) use EU funds.

Some youth organisations or youth associations are supported through EU funds. EU funds that have been used are:

- Erasmus+: Erasmus+ is the EU funding programme for education, training, youth and sport in Europe. It runs from 2014 till the end of 2020 with a total budget of €14.7 billion. Within Erasmus+ there are different sections: one for education and training, one for sport and one for youth projects. The youth section of Erasmus+ is called Youth in Action. It funds projects for and by young people and youth organisations. It has a separate budget and specific project possibilities. In 2016, the Youth in Action programme in Flanders had a budget of €2 445 718. The Flemish

Government has designated JINT vzw to co-ordinate and to implement the youth programme in Flanders. JINT vzw is in charge of information and promoting, training, funding and assessment.

- ESF 2014-2020: The Operational Programme for the implementation of the European Social Fund (ESF) in Flanders in the 2014-2020 period supports initiatives that increase employment and improve social cohesion in Flanders. In the years to come, €1 billion will be invested. The ESF programme lays down the priorities for the expenditure of €1 billion. €600 million is financed through the Flemish budget and €400 million through the European budget. The current Flemish labour minister, Philippe Muyters, states: "We have made up a balanced investment programme, which enjoys the support from the European Commission. The programme places the right focus on creating the best opportunities for people in their search for a job, with specific attention for youngsters and the most disadvantaged people."

Sources:

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/17-funding-youth-policy-belgium-flemish-community>

<http://www.esf-vlaanderen.be/nl/inspiratiebron/themas/jeugd/jeugd>

http://www.esf-vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/attachments/articles/op_esf_2014-2020_versie_20160201.pdf

<https://www.youthinaction.be/english>

5. Structures, actors and levels in youth work provision

5.1 State structures/public authorities deciding on or providing youth work

National public authorities

Department in charge of youth

Minister Sven Gatz, Flemish Minister for Culture, Media, Youth and Brussels

5 years: from 2014 until 2019

Department of Culture, Youth and Media

Main tasks of the Youth Division

The “Division Youth” ensures the administrative follow-up of the Flemish policy on youth and children’s rights. Furthermore, the Division implements youth policy as a socio-cultural matter. It stimulates and supports a rich and varied offer of non-commercial socio-cultural activities for young people, mainly through subsidising organisations and local authorities.

In short, the Division Youth has five main tasks:

1. Preparation, follow-up, evaluation and implementation of legislation (e.g. the Flemish Youth Policy Plan)
2. Funding support structures, youth organisations, youth projects, youth hostels and accommodation centres, as well as municipal and provincial youth (work) policy
3. Providing material support for youth work: e.g. the lending service for camping equipment for youth associations
4. Providing information on youth (work) policy (e.g. via the website and an e-zine)
5. Representing Flanders at international forums.

Source: <http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/index.aspx>

The Flemish Government develops youth policy documents which present the overall vision for youth and children’s rights policy. An essential characteristic of Flemish youth policy is implementation through explicit measures – acts or decrees. The Flemish Government tends to regulate every specific field of youth policy, as defined by its Youth Policy Plan, with decrees, which creates a complex and closed structure of regulations, leaving unrecognised forms of youth work without support. Decrees define the instruments of the youth and children’s rights policy and the funding of local and provincial authorities and youth organisations.

Source: http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/internationalesamenwerking_doc/CoE_policy-reviewEN.pdf

Number of people who work in the Division Youth

29 staff members (November 2017)

Director responsible for Youth in the Department

Johan Van Gaens, Head of Division (johan.vangaens@cjsm.vlaanderen.be)

Contact person in the youth department competent for European youth policy

Lieve Caluwaerts, Youth Policy Unit (lieve.caluwaerts@cjsm.vlaanderen.be)

Jan Vanhee, Youth Policy Unit – EU Youth Affairs Attaché (PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF BELGIUM TO THE EU - General Representation of the Government of Flanders) | Member of the CDEJ of the Council of Europe (jan.vanhee@cjsm.vlaanderen.be)

Regional public authorities with competences in the youth field

Belgium is a federal state, consisting of three Communities (the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German-Speaking Community) and three Regions (the Flemish Region, the Walloon Region and the Brussels Capital Region). There is no hierarchy between the federal, the Community and the Regional levels.

This division into three Communities and three Regions is a unique characteristic of Belgian federalism. Both types of entity have their own exclusive competences. Their territories overlap geographically, since in fact they correspond to different combinations of Belgium's four linguistic areas (the Dutch language area, the French language area, the German language area and the French-Dutch bilingual area).

Each entity has its specific area of responsibility.

- The federal level has the competence on important policy fields such as justice, social security, employment and tax legislation.
- The responsibilities of the Region are linked to its “territory” and include environment, agriculture, urban planning, housing, etc.
- The competences of the Communities are “person-related” matters such as education, health care, culture, youth, etc.

Three Ministers for Youth

The federal “Belgian” level of government only has limited competence in youth matters (e.g. some aspects of judicial youth protection), but there is no youth policy at the Belgian level. The Communities are competent for youth and youth policy, so it is on this level that most explicit “youth policy instruments” can be found. The Communities have a minister responsible for Youth, a parliamentary commission and a number of administrative departments with “youth” in their title and a large number of specific youth-related budget items. Given the fact that every Community has its own Minister for Youth, this means Belgium has three.

The three Communities, and thus also the Flemish Community, are represented in the different international forums with a youth agenda.

Source: <http://www.flanders.be/en/publications/detail/youthpolicy-in-the-three-communities-of-belgium>

Local public authorities with competences in the youth field

Five provinces and 308 local authorities fall within the administrative supervision of the Flemish Region.

Since the coming into force of the Flemish Parliament Act on local and provincial youth (work) policy in 1993, steps were taken towards a decentralised and complementary youth policy.

Most local authorities nowadays have youth services or at least one officer who is responsible for youth matters.

Since the Flemish Parliament Act on local and provincial youth (work) policy came into force in 1993, steps were taken towards a decentralised and complementary youth policy. Since 2016, the municipalities are no longer granted funding that is specifically meant for youth policy. The funds are integrated in one overarching provision to local governments (Community Fund (*Gemeentefonds*)). The aim was to increase the integration of policy making across different sectors. It also strengthened the autonomous authority of the municipalities concerning youth policy.

From 2018, the person-oriented responsibilities will be transferred to the local and regional level. Transitional measures are foreseen for 2018 and 2019. From 2020, a parliament act to support regional youth work will enter into force.

Source: http://www.vvsg.be/Werking_Organisatie/bbc/Pages/regelgeving.aspx

5.2 National or local youth councils

National youth councils

The Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on Flemish Youth Policy sets out a legislative framework for the Flemish Youth Council (*Vlaamse Jeugdraad*).

The Flemish Youth Council, an advisory body of the Government of Flanders, gives policy advice on all youth-related issues. It has been established under Flemish legislation. Every month, 24 individual youngsters and representatives of youth organisations gather for the General Assembly. During this meeting, they discuss policy developments relevant to youth and approve proposals. According to the law, the Flemish Youth Council shall be elected every three years. Following an online voting procedure, a new youth council was elected at the end of last year.

The Youth Council shall be composed of at least 16 and at most 24 members, at least one third of whom shall be younger than 25 at the start of the mandate. A maximum two thirds of the members shall be of the same gender.

With regard to its advisory task, the Flemish Youth Council can give advice at its own discretion or at the request of the Government of Flanders or the Flemish Parliament. As stipulated by law, the Government of Flanders shall request advice when making legislation implementing the Flemish Youth Policy Plan. The Flemish Youth Council shall approve its advices at the General Assembly with a two-thirds majority of the attendees. Importantly, the Government of Flanders shall explain its decision on the policy proposals relating to its competences to the Flemish Youth Council.

The Flemish Youth Council is supported in its work by the Youth Work Commission. It is a monthly meeting place for youth work organisations of Flanders. The meeting can be attended by youth workers from any organisation funded by the Flemish Parliament Act of 2012 on Flemish youth and children's rights policy. This Commission carries out important work in support of the youth council. It follows up on youth work policies and prepares policy proposals, in which the interests of youth work organisations are reflected, for the General Assembly of the Flemish Youth Council.

At the Council of Europe level, the Flemish Youth Council has been actively engaged for many years. This because of the relevance of these European decisions for youngsters and youth work in Flanders. The Flemish Youth Council has been participating through the decision-making structures of the co-management system of the Council of Europe. Its representatives have sat with officials to agree on priorities of youngsters and the youth sector. Furthermore, the Flemish Youth Council is also a member of the European Youth Forum working on Council of Europe youth matters. The Youth Council is supported by the "Ambrassade", an association recognised and funded by the Flemish Government and also responsible for development, support and provision of information to the youth sector. The Youth Council and the Ambrassade provides support services for all 106 licensed youth organisations in Flanders.

On 17 July 2015, the Flemish Government approved the aforementioned Flemish Youth and Children's Rights Policy Plan which outlines the main topics Flanders wants to address regarding children and youth. These (broad) themes are poverty, ecology, being young, mobility, education, space, well-being, housing, employment and youth culture.

Sources:

www.vlaamsejeugdraad.be

www.ambrassade.be

www.jkp.vlaanderen

Local youth councils

In the Flemish Parliament Act of 6 July 2012 on supporting and promoting local youth policy and youth work policy it is stated that a local youth council should be established and recognised in order to be eligible for subsidisation and in view of the organisation of the consultation and the participation of children and young people in the preparation and implementation of youth policy.

5.3 Youth and youth work NGOs

Youth organisations play an important role in the implementation of Flanders' youth policy. Dozens of accredited youth organisations are active at the Flemish level dedicated to youth work and young people in many different ways in a leisure-time setting.

Youth organisations or youth associations usually receive funding based on specific funding regulations or grant schemes (see above).

The legislator has assigned some specific tasks to the following organisations:

JINT (co-ordinating body for international youth work) was established to implement the European Youth programmes within the Flemish Community, to promote international exchange and co-operation of, for and by youth and to foster the reflection on youth, youth work and youth and children's rights policy by all actors involved on the basis of international exchange and co-operation.

www.jint.be

De Ambrassade (Youth Support structure) carries out following tasks:

- practice development, practice support and the provision of information to and about the youth sector
- the provision of support to the Youth Council referred to in Article 7
- the provision of information to children and young people.

www.ambrassade.be

VVJ (Association for Local Youth Services and Youth Co-ordinators) is an organisation, whose members are local authorities from the Dutch language area of Belgium and the bilingual Brussels Capital Region, the Flemish provincial authorities as well as the Flemish Community Commission in Brussels. Most of the municipal authorities are members of this support organisation. The association is granted in view of practice development, practice support and the provision of information to and about municipal and provincial youth policy. Virtually all Flemish municipalities (305 of 308) are members of the VVJ.

www.vvj.be

ADJ (General Service for Youth Tourism) manages two youth facilities of the Division Youth. It develops a policy paper to obtain an annual operating grant from the Division. The centres in question are:

- Training Centre Destelheide in Dworp focuses on management training initiatives for accredited youth associations and for consultation relating to young people and youth work: www.destelheide.be
- Youth Centre Hoge Rielen in Lichtaart hosts young people and associations for camping activities and educational initiatives. It is also suitable for nature classes, reflection or training sessions and seminars: www.hogerielen.be
- From 1 January 2018 on, also the former provincial youth centre Hanenbos will be part of ADJ.

5.4 Other relevant actors

In addition, the Flemish authorities accredit and fund some 100 nationally organised youth organisations and organisations dealing with youth information, participation and associations for cultural education.

An overview can be found on the following website: www.jeugdbeleid.be

Source: Van der Eecken A., Kemper R. and Bradt L. (2016), *Country Sheet on youth policy in Flanders*, retrieved from <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/9038134/Flanders-Country-Sheet-2016.pdf/67a6a22b-0b36-48d4-966c-d2098f5d3188>

6. Forms and examples of youth work in your country

How is youth work happening in your country, for example, is it youth centre-based, online youth work, detached or outreach youth work, open youth work, are NGOs or local authorities the main providers etc.

In Flanders, youth work is defined as non-commercial, voluntary socio-cultural work organised in the leisure sphere for or by young people between the ages of three and 30 years and under educational guidance. It promotes the advancement of the full development of young people.

The abovementioned definition applies to formal and non-formal youth work as both types of youth work are run by organisations with non-commercial purposes. Youth work in Flanders includes youth clubs, youth movements, youth work organisations, youth welfare organisations, youth services, etc.

Source: Bradt L. (2017), *Questionnaire mapping educational and career paths of youth workers in Europe*.

Are there specific forms the state encourages or supports more and why?

The following youth organisations or youth associations receive funding based on specific funding regulations or grant schemes:

- nationally organised youth associations
- associations for participation and information
- cultural education associations.

Is there support for youth work targeting specifically young people with fewer opportunities? If yes, who supports it and who carries it out?

Uit De Marge vzw supports youth initiatives targeted at vulnerable young people (<https://www.uitdemarge.be/>). They focus on building a high-quality youth work with disadvantaged children and young people and guide and support local and regional youth initiatives that (among others) work with disadvantaged children and young people. Uit De Marge also supports youth work in general in his efforts towards socially vulnerable children and young people and other social sectors in their relation to socially vulnerable children and young people.

An example of an organisation that carries out youth (social) work and outreach youth work is Vzw Lejo (<https://www.lejo.be/>). Other examples that are specifically targeted at young people with fewer opportunities are Arktos, Groep Intro, JES vzw, Hannibal, Kena, Akindo and Bizon.

Source:

Bradt L. (2017). *Questionnaire mapping educational and career paths of youth workers in Europe*.

Please give three examples of successful youth work practices representative of youth work in your country.

- Youth movements: Youth movements refer to the wide range of organisations that organise volunteer-led activities for young people once a week (usually Saturday or Sunday). Generally, the young people are grouped according to their age. Most have their own ideology and their own uniform. Membership dues are usually relatively low. Examples are Chiro and Scouts.
- Youth houses: Youth houses are open and informal meeting places for young people. They reach every week thousands of young people and volunteers. In almost every Flemish municipality there is a youth house.
- The animated playgrounds: Animated playgrounds offer children and young people between 3 and 14 years old an offer of adult-led activities. Most take place in the open air, some also have a room in a building. The animated playgrounds take place in school vacations.

Do you have examples of digital/online youth work developing?

There are examples of online youth work in Flanders but they do not receive funding.

7. Quality standards

Are there any competence frameworks or quality standards guiding youth workers and youth work activities in your country? Is there any structure involved in overseeing their implementation? If not, what guides the quality aspects of youth work? What evaluation references are used to assess the quality of youth work?

There is no national quality assurance framework for youth work. However, the Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on a revised youth and children's rights policy plan ensures structural support for youth work organisations at community level. It sets out funding conditions for national-level (i.e. Flemish) youth organisations and requires that the organisations operate in line with the national-level priorities. In this connection, each structural subsidised youth organisation must submit an annual progress report which entails among others a financial report and an activity report.

(Source, only in Dutch: *Decreet houdende vernieuwd jeugd en kinderrechtenbeleid*)

As already mentioned, youth worker is not an officially recognised profession in Flanders. Consequently, there is no national competence-based framework and there are no competence descriptors for youth workers. However, the notion of "youth worker" is defined by law.

The Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 defines a youth worker as any person who takes responsibility in youth work and has demonstrable experience, or makes efforts in the area of education or training in relation to youth (source: http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/regelgeving_VJKB/decreet_vernieuwdJKRB_tekstPLEN.pdf).

It is remarkable that the definition defined by the Flemish Parliament Act does not distinguish between professional youth worker and voluntary youth worker.

Source: Bradt L. (2017), *Questionnaire mapping educational and career paths of youth workers in Europe*.

8. Knowledge and data on youth work

The Flemish Government is mapping the youth (work) policy of the local governments in the *cijferboek* (book with quantitative figures). The *cijferboek* appears every three years. It's a questionnaire, which monitors the policy of local governments concerning youth. This questionnaire results in quantitative figures on the local youth policy, such as political responsibilities, youth councils, presence and support of youth work, infrastructure of youth work, youth space, information for youth and communication and cooperation with other sectors

(<http://statistieken.vlaanderen.be/QvAJAXZfc/opendoc.htm?document=CJSM%2FCJSM%20-%20Cijferboek.qvw&host=QVS%40cwv100154&anonymous=true>).

The Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on a renewed Flemish policy on youth and children's rights mentions that the Youth Monitor (JOP-monitor) is one of the instruments for a youth and children's rights policy. The Youth Monitor is a scientific report with statistical data on youth gathered by the Youth Research Platform.

Before 2003 no systematic and co-ordinated efforts were made in youth research in Flanders, resulting in overlaps and gaps. Policy makers as well as practitioners and researchers experienced this as an obstacle. In order to overcome these obstacles, the Youth Research Platform (JOP) was established in Spring 2003 by the Flemish Minister for Home Affairs, Culture, Youth and the Civil Service. The Youth Research Platform (JOP) is an interdisciplinary and inter-university collaboration between Ghent University, KU Leuven and Vrije Universiteit Brussel (www.jeugdonderzoekplatform.be).

The JOP periodically gathers own empirical data on the conduct, convictions and life circumstances of contemporary Flemish youth through this Youth Monitor (JOP-monitor). Therefore, a standardised questionnaire has been developed, which monitors the life conditions and activities of young people. The content of the survey is based on other research instruments and explicitly aims to document several topics relevant to Flemish youth, such as youth work, education, work, sociodemographic information, household, political attitude, leisure participation, media, (school) well-being and delinquency. The Youth Monitor appears at least every five years. The first Youth Monitor was conducted in 2005-2006. Since the administration of the first monitor in 2005, two new versions of the Youth Monitor have been administered, each also in a random sample of Flemish youth, both times between the ages of 12 and 30. In 2008, the second Youth Monitor was conducted by a mail survey and in 2013 the third version of the Youth Monitor was administered. The statistical data of these Youth Monitors can be explored through an interactive database (see: <http://databank.jeugdonderzoekplatform.be/>).

Next to these general surveys, JOP city-monitors have been administered in several cities in Flanders. These surveys more specifically aim to bring more insight into the specificity of growing up and living in contemporary urban environments in Flanders. More specifically, a School Monitor was conducted in the city of Brussels in 2010. In 2012, a School Monitor was conducted in the cities of Antwerp and Ghent. In 2013, a new school survey in the cities of Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels was administered. These studies offer a more comprehensive and more nuanced insight in the living conditions, attitudes and behaviour of young people growing up in Flemish cities. Participation in youth work is one of the topics covered in these monitors.

Further, also other research on specific themes concerning youth is executed ad hoc.

Furthermore, on a regular basis, the Division Youth is funding research on specific themes concerning children and young people or youth work (e.g. young people with disabilities, young people in a residential unit, etc.).

Sources:

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/overview-belgium-flemish-community>

Van der Eecken A., Kemper R. and Bradt L. (2016), *Country Sheet on youth policy in Flanders*, retrieved from <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/9038134/Flanders-Country-Sheet-2016.pdf/67a6a22b-0b36-48d4-966c-d2098f5d3188>

www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be

<http://databank.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be/#>

If data is available, how many young people benefit from youth work in your country on an annual basis (proportional to the total youth population)?

There is no data available about how many young people benefit from youth work in Flanders.

If data is available, how many youth workers are employed and how many are volunteering in your country?

There is no data available.

Please include any available sources of information on youth work in your country.

In Flanders, there are no aggregate data on the number of youth workers, both professional staff and volunteers in youth work. Data from Sociare, the Socio-Cultural Employers' Federation, indicates that 1 579 persons were employed by their 149 member youth organisations in the first quarter of 2012. However, this does not only include youth workers employed by youth organisations but also other staff such as administrative and management personnel. Flanders does not collect data on the number of professional or voluntary youth workers. The study "Working with young people: the value of youth work in the EU" interviewed some Flemish youth organisations. The interviewees of this study suggest that the number of voluntary youth workers could be as large as 100 000 persons. The ratio of professional to voluntary youth workers is estimated to be 9:1, meaning that for nine voluntary youth workers there is one professional youth worker. This would suggest that there are between 1 000 and 2 000 professional youth workers in Flanders. This ratio very well reflects the structure of the sector which is mainly volunteer-led, occasionally supported by professional staff.

Source: Bradt L. (2017), *Questionnaire mapping educational and career paths of youth workers in Europe*.

9. European and International dimension of youth work in the country

Co-operation with European countries

Council of Europe

The Flemish Government gives a yearly contribution to the European Youth Foundation. The representative of the Flemish Government is active in the CDEJ and in different expert groups. The Flemish Government supports “Perspectives on youth: European Partnership Series”. This series aims to function as an information, discussion, reflection and dialogue forum on European developments in the field of youth policy, youth research and youth work. The Flemish Government supports the further exploration and development of the series “History on youth work and youth policy in Europe”.

Follow-up of the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) on the national level

The Flemish Youth Policy Plan has a European perspective. It was closely connected to the endeavours of the Belgian Presidency of the EU Council and to the “European Youth Strategy 2010-2018”. After extensive consultations with young people and a series of youth policy stakeholders in the EU member states, eight priority themes were put forward. These themes provided an important framework for the development of the Youth Policy Plan. The Flemish Government will use its international cultural co-operation agreements to collect expertise and exchange approaches on these topics.

The Division Youth is represented in the National Working Group of the Structured Dialogue.

The Division Youth foresees representation in most of the expert groups and peer-learning exercises set up in the framework of the EU Youth Strategy.

Bilateral co-operation

The Division Youth has a direct bilateral co-operation with Luxembourg, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Catalonia. Seminars and study visits on specific youth topics are organised in the framework of a two- or three-year work programme. For example, a study visit to Latvia on increasing participation of all young people in different decision-making processes on the national level. This study visit is part of the bilateral co-operation with Latvia.

The Division Youth mostly also has a chapter in the cultural agreements the Flemish Government has with different countries.

International co-operation beyond the EU

Since 1996 the Division Youth has a direct bilateral co-operation with South Africa. South Africa and the Flemish Government co-operated in the areas of culture, art, sport and youth. The basis of this co-operation is the three-year work programmes. Up to 2006 these programmes have focused on two aspects:

- capacity building of libraries and non-formal adult education
- capacity building of young South Africans who were designated to develop a strong youth policy.

Since 2006 the initiatives of co-operation are characterised by a transversal approach. This is reflected in the “adoption” of four local community centres in the field of Culture, Youth, and Heritage. At the end of the collaboration, the four local community centres have to be an example of an integrated community centre. In addition, the educated South Africans can pass their knowledge on to actors who are involved in the community centres. In this way, they inform and sensibilise the youth policy actors through activities and capacity building. The selected community centres have to obtain a connection in local culture and youth policy.

Sources:

www.sociaalcultureel.be

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/18-cross-border-cooperation-belgium-flemish-community>

What international youth work opportunities are present in your country for young people and for youth workers? What programmes are promoted? Which opportunities for exchange of experiences among youth work practitioners are included?

Intercontinental youth work co-operation

Bilateral co-operation between Flanders and South Africa

Since 1996, there has been co-operation on youth matters between Flanders and South Africa.

The co-operation between the Department of Culture, Youth and Media of the Flemish Community and the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) of South Africa focuses on voluntary work of young people and civil society.

They are also working on a publication about 20 years of co-operation.

Funding programme global youth projects

The Flemish Government had an additional funding programme for youth projects in the context of North-South co-operation. It provided opportunities for youth groups to run a project with a partner from a country on the DAC list of the OECD.

This funding programme stopped in 2012, because the Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on conducting a renewed policy on youth and children's rights did not provide grants for international youth projects.

However, there are funding programmes for international projects and youth work co-operation offered by JINT vzw.

JINT vzw

Since 1989, the Flemish Government has supported the Flemish co-ordinating agency for international youth work, JINT. The Flemish Government subsidises JINT through the Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on conducting a renewed policy on youth and children's rights.

JINT was established to implement the European Youth programmes within the Flemish Community, to promote international exchange and co-operation of, for and by youth and to foster the reflection on youth, youth work and youth and children's rights policy by all actors involved on the basis of international exchange and co-operation.

JINT not only focuses on projects within the EU, but promotes all international learning mobility through its websites, newsletters and publications.

In addition, JINT is the Flemish co-ordinating body for international youth work and the National Agency for the European Youth in Action Programme in Flanders. The youth section of Erasmus+ is called Youth in Action. It funds projects for and by young people and youth organisations. It has a separate budget and specific project possibilities.

Development co-operation activities

Several Flemish-funded organisations encourage young people to participate in development co-operation activities either in their country of residence or abroad. For example:

Go strange

In Flanders, JINT guides young people across borders under the flag Go Strange. Young people with plans to travel abroad can find international exchange possibilities, such as volunteering, volunteering in development co-operation projects, studying and internships, on the website of Go Strange. Flemish or-

ganisations involve volunteers in their development co-operation projects. Sometimes, there are calls for volunteers to work in the South.

In 2015, there was a research (*cijferonderzoek*) on the numbers of Go Strange. 6 442 Flemish young people aged between 14 and 30 went abroad for an international experience via a Flemish organisation. 23% of these young people (1 512 young people) did international volunteer work.

JINT supports Go Strange and young people with plans to travel abroad through the Youth in Action program of Erasmus+. It funds projects for and by young people and youth organisations. It has a separate budget and specific project possibilities.

Bouworde vzw (Building order)

Bouworde allows young people to approach the world differently by enabling them to volunteer in social, technical or ecological projects abroad. Bouworde strives for a world where basic rights for everyone will be respected. During a social “building camp”, volunteers help others. During a technical camp, volunteers help with building or renovation. An ecological camp focuses on working in and for nature.

Bouworde has different projects for 15-17 year olds, 18-30 year olds, groups and schools and organises trips based on voluntary participation. Bouworde owns 114 volunteer camps in 38 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

Bouworde is a national organised youth association funded by the Flemish Government.

Youth service Don Bosco

Youth service Don Bosco (Jeugdendienst Don Bosco) supports young people to do volunteer work and offers training initiatives and various forms of leisure activities. Youth service Don Bosco also offers youth projects, youth exchanges, training projects or individual volunteer work in Europe, Africa, Asia and South America.

Every year, youth service Don Bosco prepares nearly 500 young people to do voluntary youth work.

Youth service Don Bosco is a national organised youth association funded by the Flemish Government. The international secretariat of Don Bosco is financially supported by the European Union, through its Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme.

Source:

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/96-intercontinental-youth-work-and-development-cooperation-belgium-flemish>

10. Current debates and open questions/policies on youth work

What are the open questions, debates and priorities around youth work development in your country?

A priority around youth work development is how youth work can deal with the growing diversity in our society.

Source: De Visscher K. and Neyens M. Visienota, *Diversiteit in/en het jeugdwerk*, retrieved from https://ambrassade.be/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/visienota_diversiteit_deel1.pdf

A sticking point is overregulation: as a result of the multitude of administrative procedures and regulations, there is little room for bottom-up initiatives and innovation in youth work.

Source: <https://docs.vlaamsparlement.be/docs/stukken/2014-2015/g127-1.pdf>

Is there any cross-sectoral co-operation with other fields? What is the role and what are the strengths of youth work in that co-operation?

Youth policy is a transversal policy, which is to include not only the area of “culture, youth and media” (where the youth policy field sits, inside the 13 policy fields of the Flemish Government), but also other policy fields such as social inclusion, employment, health and housing. It is envisaged that each department takes its own responsibilities and defines tasks linked to the implementation of specific goals within the Youth Policy Plan, while the Minister for Youth is in charge of overseeing the process and reporting on the plan’s implementation to the government. Youth policy is based on the group policy approach, which permeates almost every other policy sector, focusing on youth as a specific group.

Besides the Flemish Youth and Children's Rights Policy Plan, the Act on a renewed Flemish Youth and Children's Rights Policy envisages three more instruments of youth policy:

- Impact study of new legislation on children and youth (JoKER) – this specifies that any draft Act affecting the people under the age of 25 and submitted to the Flemish Parliament has to be accompanied by a report regarding its impact on children and youth.
- Contact points for youth and children’s rights and a co-ordinating administration – all bodies of the Flemish Government have to appoint one staff member as the contact point for the youth policy. These individuals should be involved in the monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Youth Policy Plan and responsible for estimating the impact of the policy of their institution on young people. The Division Youth is the co-ordinating administration in all these matters.
- Youth Progress Report – a scientific report, to be produced every five years, describing the state of the youth in the Flemish Community.

Sources:

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/15-cross-sectorial-approach-other-ministries-belgium-flemish-community>

www.sociaalcultureel.be

A good example of a cross-sectoral approach is the project *Werkpalet*, whereby the youth social work organisation JES vzw co-operates with the public employment service of Flanders, VDAB. This is to promote the employment of vulnerable young people. The strength of youth work in that co-operation is that they often know the young people and their overall situation very well. They often have a trusting re-

lationship with young people. Youth workers of JES vzw meet the young people on their own territories and take the time to overcome (work) obstacles together.

Source: <http://www.ies.be/pagina/Werkpalet>