



YouthPartnership

QUESTIONNAIRE
“BETTER
UNDERSTANDING OF
YOUTH”
BELGIUM (FLANDERS)



YouthPartnership
Council of Europe
European Commission




Education and Culture DG



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1 Structures and actors that play a role in gaining a better understanding and knowledge of young people

1.1 Specific youth departments in universities dealing with youth issues

Youth is looked at from different angles, especially from the viewpoint of social sciences (child and adolescent psychology, youth sociology, social pedagogy, historical pedagogy, youth criminology, etc.), but also, and to a lesser extent, from the viewpoint of other disciplines such as law, economy, history, etc.

- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Hoger Instituut voor de Arbeid (Higher Institute for Labour - HIVA) Dr. Cossey.
Themes: work, education.
<http://www.hiva.be>
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven Instituut voor Criminologie (Leuven Institute for Criminology - LINC). Prof. Johan Deklerck.
Theme: youth crime, prevention
<http://www.law.kuleuven.be/linc/>
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, School voor Massacommunicatieresearch (School for Mass Communication Research) (OE). Prof. J. Van den Bulck.
Theme: media
<http://soc.kuleuven.be/smc/>
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Centrum voor Gezins- en Orthopedagogiek (Centre for Family and Orthopedagogy). Prof. Karla Van Leeuwen.
Theme: family and upbringing support
<http://ppw.kuleuven.be/ortho/>
- Vrije Universiteit Brussel, vakgroep Sociologie (Social Science), Onderzoeksgroep TOR. Prof. Mark Elchardus.
Themes: education, youth culture and participation.
<http://www.vub.ac.be/TOR/>
- Universiteit Antwerpen, departement Sociologie (Social Science), Research Centre for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies (CELLO). Prof. Dimitri Mortelmans.
Theme: youth information policy
<http://www.ua.ac.be>
- Universiteit Antwerpen, departement Sociologie (Social Science), Research Centre for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies (CELLO). Prof. Meulemans.
Themes: education, youth work.
<http://www.ua.ac.be>

- Universiteit Gent, vakgroep Sociale Agogiek (Department of Social Welfare Studies).
Prof. Maria Bouverne-De Bie en Prof. Nicole Vettenburg
Themes: youth work, youth assistance, childcare, children's rights
<http://www.sociale-agogiek.ugent.be/>
- Universiteit Gent, vakgroep Onderwijskunde (Didactics). Prof. Martin Valcke.
Themes: education
<http://www.onderwijskunde.ugent.be/>
- Universiteit Gent, vakgroep sociologie (Social Science). Prof. Vincke
Theme: Flemish pupil survey
<http://www.psw.ugent.be/socio/>
- Limburgs Universitair Centrum (LUC) Diepenbeek, Instituut voor Mobiliteit
(Department of Mobility).
Theme: mobility
<http://www.luc.ac.be/imob>
- Limburgs Universitair Centrum (LUC), Diepenbeek, Sociaal-Economisch Instituut
(Socio-Economic Department). Prof. dr. Mieke Van Haegendoren
Themes: equal opportunities
<http://www.luc.ac.be/sein/>

Various collaborative partnerships have been created between university research groups (e.g. Steunpunt Gelijke kansenbeleid [Support Point Equality Policy] as well as autonomous centres that have grown out of universities (e.g. Vormingscentrum voor de Begeleiding van het Jonge Kind – Expertisecentrum voor Opvoeding en Kinderopvang [Educational Centre for Supervising the Young Child – Expertise Centre for Upbringing children and Child care]).

1.2 Statistic offices that collect statistics on youth

Each year, the Studiedienst Vlaamse Regering [Flemish Government Research Service] (SVR) of the Flemish Community publishes a number of documents, which do not focus on young people in particular but which reveal some elements of the living conditions of youngsters.

<http://www4.vlaanderen.be/dar/svr/Pages/default.aspx>

- VRIND (Vlaamse Regionale Indicatoren): a survey of demographic, macro-economic and socio-cultural context data: No specific website, see

http://aps.vlaanderen.be/statistiek/publicaties/stat_Publicaties_vrind.htm

- Profiel Vlaanderen: positioning of Flanders vis-à-vis other European countries on the basis of indicators: No specific website, see

http://aps.vlaanderen.be/statistiek/publicaties/stat_Publicaties_profiel.htm

The Studiedienst Vlaamse Regering (Flemish Government Research Service) (SVR) also holds an annual citizens' survey into values, attitudes and behaviour with regard to social and policy-relevant themes. For this survey a face-to-face enquiry is carried out using random sampling. (1,500 Flemings between 18 and 85). Young people are divided into age groups of 18-24 years and 25-34 years. Every two years the scientific analyses of the APS citizens' survey are published in the publication "Vlaanderen gepeild" (Flanders surveyed).

<http://www4.vlaanderen.be/dar/svr/Enquetes/Pages/Enquetes.aspx>

1.3 Major public and semi-public bodies dealing with [youth research](#), public companies included

- Onderzoeks- en informatiecentrum van de Verbruikers Organisaties.

Theme: consumption

<http://www.oivo-crioc.org/>

- Vereniging voor Alcohol- en andere Drugsproblemen (Association for Alcohol and other Drug Problems)

Theme: substance use

<http://www.vad.be>

- Onderzoekscentrum Kind en Samenleving (Child and Society).

Themes: mobility, child participation

<http://www.k-s.be/>

- Kinderrechtencommissariaat. J. Van Haelst.

Coordination of contact points for Children's Rights.

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

- Kind en Gezin.(Child and Family)

Themes: day care for children, deprived children, adoption, child abuse

<http://www.kindengezin.be>

- Koning Boudewijnstichting. (King Baudouin Foundation)

Themes: poverty, social exclusion, social commitment

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

- In Petto Jeugddienst (Youth Service)

Themes: information and prevention

<http://www.inpetto-jeugddienst.be/>

- Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre)

Themes: youth work, youth policy

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<http://www.steunpuntjeugd.be>

- VDAB.

Theme: labour, unemployment

<http://www.vdab.be>

- Vereniging Vlaamse Jeugddiensten en –Consulenten (Association for Flemish Youth Services and Consultants)

Themes: (local) youth policy

<http://www.vvj.be>

This is not an exhaustive list.

1.4 NGOs dealing with youth issues

All nationally organised youth work organisations know the needs and expectations of young people.

A list of those associations can be found at the following website:

http://www.steunpuntjeugd.be/informatie/landelijk_jeugdwerk/

1.5 Youth researchers or experts

The partners of the Youth Research Platform, an interdisciplinary and interuniversity partnership of three research groups, can particularly be mentioned here.

The Welfare Work research group (Universiteit Gent, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences) studies educational practice in the broader context of structures and services which are aimed at social and cultural development and devotes special attention to young people's views. Youth work, youth assistance and youth protection are key research themes.

The Tempus Omnia Revelat research group (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences) focuses attention on the following themes: time use, cultural changes, media, youth culture, the living environment of young people, education, citizenship, participation in education and social life.

The Leuven Institute of Criminology (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Faculty of Law) studies the following key research themes: social vulnerability and juvenile delinquency, school, prevention, urbanisation, youth protection and restorative justice. It is evident that other Flemish universities and colleges of higher education also have expertise in the field of youth research.

1.6 Private companies dealing with youth research

In Flanders, there are no private, non-funded organisations which focus specifically on youth research. Private companies (e.g. banks, commercial television companies) conduct market

research into the habits of young people (e.g. with regard to spending money, use of time, purchasing power, etc.) for commercial purposes on a regular basis.

1.7 Other actors (if any)

N/A

2 Legal basis or guidelines for activities leading to a better knowledge and understanding of youth

The Flemish Parliament Act of 29 March 2002 on Flemish youth policy sets out rules for drawing up a Flemish Youth Policy and the funding of Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre) and Vlaamse Jeugdraad (Flemish Youth Council). This explicitly states that attention must be paid to youth research. The Act of 23 December 2005 amending the Act of 14 February 2003 on supporting and stimulating municipal, inter-municipal and provincial youth policy and youth work policy stipulates, among other things, that each municipality and province must draw up a policy plan on youth (work). Apart from the planned policy measures, a description of the existing situation and a needs analysis are included. Depending on local implementation, this can contribute to a better knowledge and understanding of young people. By virtue of this Flemish Parliament Act, when drafting their policy plan on youth work, local authorities are obliged to gather figures on the position of young people and, as far as data collection is concerned, this only involves collecting information at local level. In the act of 19 December 2003 in relation to the general expenses budget of the Flemish Community, credit was reserved for scientific support for youth policy for the first time. These resources were used for supporting the Youth Research Platform.

3 Funding for research on youth

3.1 International funding for carrying out activities aimed at youth research

N/A

3.2 EU funding for carrying out activities aimed at acquiring a better knowledge and understanding of youth

N/A

3.3 Public and private national funding for carrying out activities aimed at acquiring a better knowledge and understanding of youth

Specific grants for youth research are only allocated by the Youth and Sports Division of the Flemish government. A few examples: In 2006, In Petto received grants amounting to

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232,000 EUR, Jeugdwerknet (Youth Work Network) non-profit organisation received 152,000 EUR, Onderzoekscentrum Kind en Samenleving (Research and development centre childhood and society) received 219,000 EUR, the Flemish Youth Council received 521,930 EUR (in 2008: 642,000 EUR), Youth Support Centre 902,184 EUR (in 2008: 947,000 EUR), JINT 806,790 EUR (in 2008: 843,000 EUR), VVJ 269,325 EUR (in 2008: 285,000 EUR) and the Youth Research Platform received 287,000 EUR (in 2007: 226,430 EUR). (Source: Kroniek 2006 and http://www.cjsm.vlaanderen.be/jeugdbeleid/beleid/begroting_jeugd/index.html) Other grants from the Federal government, Koning Boudewijnstichting (King Baudouin Foundation) and Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek Vlaanderen (Flanders Scientific Research Foundation) are allocated to universities, colleges of higher education and support structures for policy relevant research that also deal with youth research. The conditions and size of grants vary according to the research project in question. Some examples of funded research can be found at <http://www.ewi-vlaanderen.be/>. The research projects are not always explicitly aimed at young people but they feature in the plan. Private contributions are provided by companies and charities (e.g. CERA-Foundation, Telenet-Foundation, Belgian American Educational Foundation, ...) (Source: national report 'Beter begrip en kennis' [Better understanding and knowledge], website cjsm)

3.4 Actor(s)/structure(s) mainly receiving funding

Grants are allocated to universities, colleges of higher education and support structures for policy relevant research that deal with youth research. The Youth Research Platform (JOP) is subsidised. NGOs, public and semi-public bodies dealing with youth research also receive subsidies.

4 Paper publications in the youth field

4.1 Statistics of books published in the youth field for the current year

- Youth and Sports Division of the Ministry of the Flemish Community. Cijferboek Jeugdwerk (Figure Book Youth Work) 2005-2007.
- - Youth and Sports Division of the Ministry of the Flemish Community. Zoekboek Jeugdwerk (Search book Youth work) 2005-2007.
- Vettenburg, N., Elchardus, M. & Walgrave, L. (eds.) (2006) 'Jongeren van nu en straks. Overzicht en synthese van recent jeugdonderzoek in Vlaanderen' [Youngsters now and later. Summary and synthesis of recent youth research in Flanders] . Leuven: Lannoocampus.
- Vettenburg, N., Elchardus, M. & Walgrave, L. (Eds.) (2007). Jongeren in cijfers en letters. Bevindingen uit de JOP-monitor 1 [Youngsters in figures and letters. Findings from the JOP Monitor 1]. Leuven: Lannoocampus.

4.2 Regular youth reports

- Youth and Sports Division of the Ministry of the Flemish Community. Cijferboek Jeugdwerk (Figure Book Youth Work) 2005-2007. Published every three years.

<http://www.cjsm.vlaanderen.be/jeugdbeleid/publicaties/documenten/cijferboek2005.pdf>

- Youth and Sports Division of the Ministry of the Flemish Community Zoekboek Jeugdwerk (Search book Youth work) 2005- 2007. Information on local and provincial youth work and youth work policy. Published every three years.

http://www.cjsm.vlaanderen.be/jeugdbeleid/publicaties/zoekboek_jeugdwerk/index.html

- VDAB Studie schoolverlaters – Trends & Cijfers. (Survey on school-leavers.) Annually.

<http://www.vdab.be>

- 'Kind en Gezin' publishes many annual reports. They tackle the following topics: day care for children, out-of-school childcare, vaccinations for children, deprivation data, adoption and child abuse.

<http://www.kindengezin.be>

- VAD. Annual synthesis report on drug use among school age youth.

<http://www.vad.be>

- Kinderrechtencommissariaat. Annual report.

<http://www.kinderrechten.be>

4.3 Journals and reviews on youth research

Journals

The following Flemish magazines and loose-leaf publications cover youth research on a regular basis:

- Communication: magazine for mass media and culture. Leuven: KULeuven. Centre for communicative sciences. Three-monthly.
- "KRAX", specialist journal of youth work. Brussel: Steunpunt Jeugd (The Service Centre for Youth Policy). Three-monthly. <http://www.steunpuntjeugd.be/krax/archief.html>
- Panopticon: magazine for penal law, criminology and forensic social work. Antwerp: Kluwer jurisprudence. Bimonthly <http://www.panopticon-net.org/>
- "Persoon en gemeenschap": magazine on upbringing and education. Antwerp: persoon en gemeenschap. Ten times a year.
- "Sociaal" (Social Welfare magazine). Diegem: Kluwer editorial. Ten times a year. Welfare work, youth care, care for the disabled, migrant issues.
- "Tijdschrift voor jeugdrecht en kinderrechten." Ghent: Larcier.
- Tijdschrift voor onderwijsrecht en onderwijsbeleid. Bruges: Die Keure. Five times a year.

<http://www.onderwijsrecht.be/databank/torbarchief.asp>

- "Tijdschrift voor sociologie". Leuven: Acco. <http://www.sociologie.be/tijdschrift/index.htm>
- "Welwijs. Wisselwerking onderwijs en welzijnswerk." Leuven: Majong. Four times a year. <http://www.welwijs.be>

In addition, Flemish youth research is also covered in the following Dutch magazines:

- "Kind en Adolescent", a magazine on pedagogy, psychiatry and psychology. Deventer : Van Loghum Slaterus. Three-monthly.
- "Comenius": wetenschappelijk forum voor opvoeding, onderwijs en cultuur (scientific forum for upbringing, education and culture). Nijmegen: SUN. Three-monthly.
- "Pedagogische studiën", magazine about pedagogy and education. Wolters-Kluwer. Six times a year.
- "O/25". Utrecht: Stichting jeugd en samenleving (Youth and Society Foundation).
- "Mens en Maatschappij": magazine about social sciences. Deventer: Van Loghum Slaterus. Three-monthly. <http://www.mensenmaatschappij.nl/>
- "Pedagogiek": scientific forum on upbringing, education and culture. Assen: Van Gorcum. Three-monthly. <http://www.pedagogiek-online.nl>
- Sociale Wetenschappen. Tilburg: sociale wetenschappen. Three-monthly.
- Sociologische Gids: tijdschrift voor sociologie en sociaal onderzoek (magazine for Social Science and Social Research). Meppel: Boom. Bimonthly.
- Tijdschrift voor communicatiewetenschap. Houten: Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum. Three-monthly.
- Tijdschrift voor criminologie. Den Haag: Boom Juridische Uitgevers. Three-monthly. <http://www.criminologie.nl/tvc/index.html>

Reviews

The Youth Research Platform regularly reports on Flemish Youth research. A first synthesis report appeared in December 2004: Burssens, D., De Groof, S., Huysmans, H., Sinnaeve, I., Stevens, F., Van Nuffel, K., Vettenburg, N., Elchardus, M., Walgrave, L. & De Bie, M. (Eds.) (2004). Jeugdonderzoek belicht. Voorlopig synthesesrapport van wetenschappelijk onderzoek naar Vlaamse kinderen en jongeren [Youth research explained. Interim synthesis report of scientific research into Flemish children and youngsters] (2000-2004). Unpublished research report, K.U.Leuven, Vrije Universiteit Brussel & UGent.

Themes that are covered in this report are: family, child care, education, leisure time, media, delinquency, work, welfare, mobility, perception of space, housing and ecology.

<http://www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be>

For a summary and synthesis of recent youth research in Flanders, the Youth Research Platform also refers to the book: Vettenburg, N., Elchardus, M. & Walgrave, L. (Eds.) (2006) 'Jongeren van nu en straks. Overzicht en synthese van recent jeugdonderzoek in Vlaanderen' [Youngsters now and later. Summary and synthesis of recent youth research in Flanders] . Leuven: Lannoocampus.

A wide range of information on the environment of 14 to 25 year olds can be found in: Vettenburg, N., Elchardus, M. & Walgrave, L. (Eds.) (2007). Jongeren in cijfers en letters. Bevindingen uit de JOP-monitor 1 [Youngsters in figures and letters. Findings from the JOP Monitor 1]. Leuven: Lannoocampus. With synthesis in English on the website:

<http://www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be/publicaties/index.htm#boeken>

Other summaries and analyses of existing research:

Bouverne-De Bie, M. (1993). De sociaal-culturele situatie van jongeren vandaag. Een synthese van recent jeugdonderzoek [The Socio-Cultural Situation of Youngsters Today. A synthesis of recent youth research]. Brussels: Koning Boudewijnstichting (+ re-edited version '96 in Allegaert P. (red.) Als een lekker taartje. Jongeren in het interesseveld. Acco, Leuven.)
De Witte, H., Hooge, J. & Walgrave, L. (2000). (Red.) Jongeren in Vlaanderen: gemeten en geteld. 12- tot 18-jarigen over hun leefwereld en toekomst [Youth in Flanders: measured and counted. Youngsters aged 12 to 18 on their environment and future). Leuven: Universitaire Pers.

5 IT dissemination of knowledge in the youth field

5.1 Web-Portals and online databases for a better understanding of youth

Portals

Jeugdonderzoeksplatform (Youth Research Platform). Theme: youth research

<http://www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be>

Jeugdbeleid van Vlaamse overheid (Youth Policy of the Flemish Government). Theme: youth and youth (work) policy. <http://www.cjsm.vlaanderen.be/jeugdbeleid/>

Jeugdwerknet (Youth work network). Theme: youth work. <http://www.jeugdwerknet.be/>

Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre) Theme: Flemish, provincial and local youth (work) policy; organisation management, youth tourism, green spaces, diversity, inter-sector, management training <http://www.steunpuntjeugd.be>

De Vlaamse Jeugdraad (The Flemish Youth Council). The official advisory body of the Flemish government on all issues related to children and young people.

<http://www.vlaamsejeugdraad.be>

Databases

The Youth Research Platform has a database in which an inventory is kept of research on Flemish youth (from 2000 onwards). Thus, the official language is Dutch. There is a summary available in English of the most important findings from the JOP Monitor 1. A file is linked to the reference which contains the core of the research programme: reference, form of publication, abstract, commissioning body, questionnaire and methods of enquiry, outcomes and policy recommendations. The database is updated every three months and is freely available on the website <http://www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be/databank/>

The IWETO database (Inventaris Wetenschappelijk en Technologisch Onderzoek Vlaanderen – Inventory of Scientific and Technological Research in Flanders) is an automated and permanently available system of data on current research undertaken at Flemish universities. In one of the partial databases, i.e. 'Maatschappelijke structuren en relaties' (Social structures and relations), the existing youth research conducted by universities can be found, but 'youth' has no separate heading.

<http://www.luc.ac.be/onderzoek/onderzoeksinformatie/iweto/default.asp>

5.2 Statistics, reports, journals, reviews or other publications available on the internet

VDAB. Studie schoolverlaters. Annually. <http://www.vdab.be>

Kind en Gezin issues a great deal of reports each year. These deal with the following subjects: child care, extracurricular care, child vaccinations, deprivation data, adoption and child abuse. <http://www.kindengezin.be>

Kinderrechtencommissariaat. Annual report. <http://www.kinderrechten.be>

KRAX, Youth Support Centre. Three-monthly magazine. Mixture of practice, research and policy. <http://www.steunpuntjeugd.be/krax/>

Burssens, D., De Groof, S., Huysmans, H., Sinnaeve, I., Stevens, F., Van Nuffel, K., Vettenburg, N., Elchardus, M., Walgrave, L. & De Bie, M. (Eds.) (2004). Jeugdonderzoek belicht. Voorlopig synthesesrapport van wetenschappelijk onderzoek naar Vlaamse kinderen en jongeren [Youth research explained. Interim synthesis report of scientific research into Flemish children and youngsters] (2000-2004). Unpublished research report, K.U.Leuven, VUB & UGent. <http://www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be>

Degreef, A. (2004). Inventarisatie bestaand onderzoek. Kind en Ruimte Onderzoekscentrum Kind en Samenleving (Inventory of existing research Child and Space. Research and development centre childhood and society). <http://www.k-s.be/>

6 Methods and approaches for gaining a better understanding and knowledge of youth and for keeping it up to date

Quantitative methods

These quantitative methods are used within the context of youth research: European tools (Eurostat, Eurobarometer), comparative studies, longitudinal studies, questionnaires and evaluation research.

Qualitative methods

These qualitative methods are used within the context of youth research: Interviews, discourse analysis, evaluation research, action research, questionnaires and comparative studies.

Triangulation

Only used with evaluation research.

Questioning youth organisations and NGOs (particularly in order to collect practical knowledge)

Het Cijferboek (The Figure Book) 2005-2007 contains a collection of figures, tables and graphs relating to local youth (work) policy that have been collected on the basis of an extensive survey.

When drafting their youth work policy plan, local authorities regularly conduct surveys into young people's wishes with regard to local youth work policy. These surveys are carried out via a wide range of methods, including the participative survey method. A number of organisations focusing on youth also undertake regular surveys, e.g. Klasse magazine, VAD (Association for Alcohol and other Drug problems), In Petto, Vlaamse Jeugdraad, etc. Part of this survey is carried out in collaboration with university centres or colleges of higher education, on the basis of contract surveying or in the context of student papers and work experiences.

Innovative methods used in the collection of youth knowledge

Participation surveys involving young people themselves are recent and usually small-scale initiatives. Nevertheless, they are an innovative trend in youth research. Furthermore, creative methods such as drawings, games, interview techniques, chat boxes, questionnaires, etc. are also used.

In 2005 the Youth Research Platform developed a youth monitor with the aim of creating a periodic collection of base data regarding the environment, the living conditions and the activities of children and youngsters. This takes place on the basis of a survey that is conducted repeatedly with youngsters between the ages of 16 and 25. The questioning takes place on an individual basis, via a postal survey. Initially a cross sectional approach was adopted. In 2008 data was collected for the second jop monitor.

Methods for keeping knowledge updated and coherent.

Little systematic and coordinated effort has been made in youth research in Flanders, thus showing overlaps and gaps in this broad area. Policy makers as well as practitioners and researchers experience this as an obstacle. In order to overcome these obstacles, the Youth Research Platform (JOP) was created in Spring 2003 as an initiative of the Flemish Minister for Home Affairs, Culture, Youth and the Civil Service. One of the tasks of the Youth Research Platform is to make an inventory of all available Flemish youth research and store this in a central and free access database which can be consulted on the following website:

<http://www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be/databank/index.htm>.

On the basis of this inventory, JOP draws up a synthesis report at regular intervals and tries to find an answer to the next questions: how are children and young people perceived? Which situations are pictured? To which questions do researchers try to find answers? In which way is knowledge about children and young people collected? What do we know about children and young people?

At the beginning of 2006 the book 'Jongeren van nu en straks. Overzicht en synthese van recent jeugdonderzoek in Vlaanderen' [Youngsters now and later. Summary and synthesis of recent youth research in Flanders] was published. It contained synthesis texts on the basis of the inventoried research from the period 2000-2004. In 2007 'Jongeren in cijfers en letters' [Youngsters in figures and letters] was published, collating the findings from the first JOP monitor.

<http://www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be/publicaties/index.htm>.

Youth policy contacts were established in the various departments of the Flemish government with a view to ensuring that the Flemish youth policy plan is implemented and monitored.

7 Quality assurance strategies and tools regarding knowledge in the field of youth used in the country.

In 2001, the Flemish government accredited twelve Policy Research Centres, which are composed of one or more research groups or one or more university institutions, for a period of five years. In the meantime, there has also been a second generation of support points (14) from 2007 to the end of 2011. They offer scientific support to the Flemish government and other relevant actors. Support centres which sometimes develop youth related activities are: Support point Policy for equal opportunities; Support point Study and School careers, Support point Culture, Youth and Sport (since 2007 the Youth Research Platform is integrated in the support point Culture, Youth and Sport) , Support point Health, Public Health and the Family, Support point Employment and Social Economy.

Exchange of information on youth (research) between researchers and policy makers mainly takes place via study days and debates (organised by various actors), research group websites and publications in magazines that primarily reach the Flemish youth and welfare sector (Krax, Welwijs, etc.). Research announcements and results on behalf of the government are communicated on the website: <http://www.ewi-vlaanderen.be>. Alongside the above information channels, discussions also take place in the advisory committees of specific research projects. On 28-02-2008 a Benelux conference took place on the subject of 'youth research in the Benelux'.

The Child Impact Assessment (KER) system legally obliges policy makers to report on the possible effects that each draft Flemish Parliament Act can have on children, if this draft Act involves decisions which have a direct impact on the children's interests.

The Youth Research Platform, founded in 2003, is also authorised to inventory and synthesize existing Flemish youth research. This synthesis report is intended for policy actors, practical workers and researchers.

8 Promotion and support provided for youth researchers and other actors, who work towards a better knowledge of youth, and their generational renewal

Facilitating the exchange of experience and practice

JOP regularly organises workshops, seminars or study days for researchers, practitioners and policy makers to present findings derived from youth surveys. On February 2007, the Youth Research Platform held a study day entitled "Jongeren in cijfers en letters" (Youngsters in figures and letters), at which the results of the JOPmonitor 1 were presented. People with practical experience as well as people from research and decision makers were all invited. For a summary of these results in English, see: www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be

Funding for PhDs and support of students in this field

Most research groups include young researchers. The intake of young researchers is strongly supported by specific measures reducing wage costs, thus benefiting academic research; for example the status of 'doctoral bursary' is explicitly intended to attract young researchers. Other support measures for young researchers are scholarships and prizes. For instance: the 'Vlaamse Scriptieprijs' of the Pascal Decroos Fund; returns grants for young Belgian researchers working abroad (outside EU); Academische Stichting Leuven;...)

The aforementioned forms of support are not specifically for youth research.

9 Networking and support of networking

9.1 Seminars and working groups for a better knowledge and understanding of youth

On 28-02-2008 there was a NITROX seminar on 'Competencies of the youth worker'. Nitrox refers to the invitation of stakeholders and experts for debates on tendencies and current youth themes in youth policy and youth research. In the past few years, various seminars have taken place each year. For 2008, a number of courses have been planned. They can be consulted at www.steunpuntjeugd.be/nitrox. In the past decade, communication about youth policy in practice has been approached from the notion of communicative planning in Flanders. This is a form of government policy in which the different stakeholders (policy makers, policy implementers, users) jointly develop a policy for a certain period of time. In this way, attempts are being made to use the knowledge potential of practitioners in a more systematic way and make them move onto the policy level. Different users ask for different communicative approaches. A diversity of working methods is required: both oral communication of knowledge (via consultation platforms, television broadcasts, actions, etc.) and written communication (via reports, web sites, textbooks, folders, actions, etc.); direct or indirect feedback via intermediaries, such as Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre) and JOP, which try to fulfil a bridging function.

9.2 Is there a permanent national network for a greater knowledge and understanding of youth linking all actors in the field (policy makers, researchers, young people and their organisations, NGOs)? If yes, give names and contacts and explain its structure and your role within this network. If no such network exists, please explain why not and if there have been any attempts to set up such a network.

The Youth Research Platform is a national network.

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The Youth Research Platform (JOP) is an interdisciplinary and interuniversity partnership of three research groups: Tempus Omnia Revelat research group (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences), Department of Social Welfare Studies (Universiteit Gent, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences) and Leuven Institute of Criminology

(Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Faculty of Law). JOP must inventory existing Flemish research into youth as well as open it up, analyse and synthesize it; and conduct new research into the development of a youth monitor. JOP has a platform function for policy actors, practitioners and researchers.

Positive aspects of Flemish youth research include its multiplicity, diversity its multidisciplinary nature, its relative independence from media and commissioning parties. Quite a lot of research is taking place, from within various institutions and disciplines, with varying methods, financed by a range of commissioning parties that often know how to weigh up the interests of youngsters against other social interests.

In the long term:

- JOP wants to be a forum for every actor in this field. It wants to make youth research accessible to researchers, policy makers and practitioners.
- JOP intends to focus the research world's attention on questions formulated by policy makers and practitioners. Several channels are used to achieve this, including the website, publications and seminars.

9.3 Networks on youth issues specific to certain actors

The Jeugdraad (Youth Council) is an official advisory and participative body comprising representatives of youth work initiatives and young people who are not members of an organisation. We can consider (activities of) youth councils as local/regional networks that may contribute to a better knowledge of young people, although this is not their primary objective. Within the Flemish Youth Council, there are three committees that meet on a monthly basis: the Committee for Youth Work Policy, the Committee for Youth Policy and the International Committee. Klets! was a conference organised every six months by the Flemish Youth Council. Klets! has since been transformed into Kletskes. A Kletske is a moment at which young people and policy makers can enter into a discussion tailored to the theme. Jeugdwerknet vzw (Youth work network non-profit organisation) is the place on the internet for youth workers.

9.4 What transnational networks with relevance for national networks are there?

Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre) intends to contribute to the smooth operation of youth work at all levels and in all its aspects. To this end, it will encourage knowledge and opinion-forming about youth policy and youth work, both at national and international level and will encourage cultural diversity; using information and documentation, promotion and distribution, study and research. In other words, Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre) wants to be a knowledge centre about and for young people, youth workers and (youth)

policy. Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre) wants to actively apply this knowledge to three target groups. It collects and multiplies information, develops methods, gives training and support in the field of participation, has a communicative function, provides services, undertakes research and provides a platform. The not-for-profit organisation JINT is the co-ordination body for international youth work.

9.5 Describe the organisation and the ways of promoting interdisciplinary dialogue on youth issues (e.g. seminars, working groups, common advisory structures ...)

A reflection group was created for drawing up the Flemish Youth Policy Plan 2006-2010.

Collaborators from other Ministers' Offices, civil servants, academics, authorities, organisations, youth councils and representatives of other sectors are involved in this group. Also, the Youth Research Platform (JOP), that also works across sectors, has created a reflection group. This reflection group acts as a critic in relation to tasks accomplished by JOP and consists of a permanent group of people who are familiar with youth themes. Its members include practitioners, academics and policy makers. The plus points of Flemish youth research are its multitudinous nature, its diversity, its multidisciplinary character and its relative independence from the media and commissioning bodies. A great deal of research is being carried out at various institutions and in various disciplines. A range of methods are being used, while funding is allocated by different commissioning bodies which often weigh the interests of young people against other social interests.