National report

Mars 2016

Abeona
AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO CARE LEAVERS’ PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

Belgium

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PART 1: NATIONAL CONTEXT AND INFORMATION

Preliminary note: the parts of text in quotation marks are quotations which were freely translated from French to English by translation agency Crealingua.

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INTRODUCTION

Objectives of the "national report"

The first part aims to present the general context of child welfare in Belgium. Four chapters are presented in this first part. The objective of the first chapter is the presentation of the legal and historical framework of child welfare as well as the structures that make up the system. The objective of the second chapter is the presentation of statistical data concerning youth assisted by child welfare. Chapter 3 focuses more specifically on professional integration. It thus aims to respond to two main questions: Which professional systems are in liaison with youth employment and which child welfare partners are in liaison with the professional integration of youth. The fourth chapter entitled "results" aims to address the "results" of these systems, their strengths and weaknesses, and the questions that they raise.

Specifics of the national report relative to Belgium

First of all, we must specify that concerning child welfare, the term "national report" is not suited to the situation in Belgium. In fact, our country is a federal state composed of three communities\(^1\), three regions\(^2\) and four linguistic areas\(^3\). There are consequently several levels of government (including the federal level)\(^4\), each with their own jurisdictions, and they must therefore make decisions and ensure the implementation of public policies in liaison with these jurisdictions.

Generally speaking, "child" is a jurisdiction of the communities. L'aide à la jeunesse (AAJ, youth outreach) is therefore not a federal (national) jurisdiction. To the extent where our contribution to the Abéona project concerns only the Federation Wallonia-Brussels, (FWB, therefore a new community level incorporating the institutions present in Wallonia and the French-speaking institutions present on the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region), we are concentrating on the organisation of the AAJ in FWB and we are not addressing the decrees which organise the AAJ in Flanders. We refer the reader to the websites indicated at the bottom of the page to obtain detailed information about Flanders\(^5\)\(^6\).

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\(^1\) The French community (now called the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles – FWB), the German-speaking community, and the Flemish community.

\(^2\) The Walloon Region, the Flemish Region, and the Brussels-Capital Region.

\(^3\) The Dutch-speaking area, the bilingual Brussels-Capital area (French-Dutch), the French-speaking area, and the German-speaking area (which groups many municipalities of the Eastern cantons).

\(^4\) The communities and regions have the legislative and executive powers in different fields of jurisdiction.


\(^6\) [https://wvg.vlaanderen.be/departementwvg/themas/fr/integrale_jeugdhulpFR.pdf](https://wvg.vlaanderen.be/departementwvg/themas/fr/integrale_jeugdhulpFR.pdf)
This report is based on three source categories:

- A brief review of the literature concerning the transition of youth assisted by the youth outreach (AAJ) towards self-sufficiency and on the professional integration of youth.
- A review of the documents and websites describing the legal framework of the youth outreach system in the Federation Wallonia-Brussels (FWB) and its evolution as well as the documents and websites describing the stakeholders of the Employment and Social and Professional Integration system in FWB.
- The reflections, experiences, and points of view of the working group made up of various stakeholders in the field of the AAJ and put in place within the framework of this research project as well as those of a focus group regarding youth leaving the AAJ system.

The first part of this report aims to be as complete as possible but it is not intended to be exhaustive. We actually had to make choices concerning the data presented, in view of the objectives of the Abéona project (which focuses more specifically on the professional integration of youth coming out of the AAJ systems) and in view of the outline that we had proposed in order to write this report.

We also insist on the fact that this report must be considered as one of the starting points of the Abéona project and not as a result. It aims to produce a situational analysis, on which the various partners can lean, to lead their focus discussions and build training methods.

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7This group met on 2 December 2015. 8 persons were present: Marjorie Henriet, Isabelle Poulet, Marc Chambeau, Philippe Lesne, Sophie Detournay, Xavier Briké, Fabienne Fauveaux, Jacqueline Maun.
8Focus group implemented within the arrondissement of Namur around various questions related to the transition of youth towards self-sufficiency. http://asbl-sypa.be/commission/passage-majorite-transition-complexe/ We met Sophie Detry and Sophie Berlière on 13 January 2016 in order to seek their point of view as representatives of this focus group.
1 CHAPTER 1: YOUTH OUTREACH IN THE FEDERATION WALLONIA-BRUSSELS

1.1 Legal and historical framework

The legal framework in the Federation Wallonia-Brussels

In the FWB, the youth outreach is governed by the decree of 4 March 1991. It should be noted that this decree is currently under amendment. Rachid Madrane, Minister for the youth outreach presented, at the beginning of the month of October 2015, a preliminary draft of a decree modifying the organisation of the youth outreach. The decree of 1991 that we mention below is therefore going to be reformed. We are briefly addressing the main changes planned by the Minister in point 1.4.

Some historical benchmarks

The taking into account of the particularity of minors began in 1912, the year during which the child welfare law was enacted. The objectives of this law, however, were mostly criminal. The concept of a "minor at risk" appeared after World War II.

In 1965, a new law was enacted. It put an emphasis on the concern of child welfare. It remains valid today but was transformed by the decree of 1991. Since this law, the risk is considered as either a consequence of the living environment of the youth, or as a consequence of his or her behaviours.

In 1990, the age of civil majority was set at 18 (it was previously set at 21).

The decree which currently governs the organisation of child welfare in the FWB was adopted in 1991. It “permits proposing specialised assistance to youth as well as to their family and working towards offering a non-legal response to those who find themselves in a difficult or risky situation. It permits offering assistance to parents who are experiencing serious difficulties accomplishing their parental obligation.”

Some key principles of the decree:

- Principle of problem-solving outside the legal system: faced with a social problem, the decree insists on the necessity to firstly provide a response of a social nature and granted assistance (see point 1.2.1 regarding youth outreach services).
- Priority is given to prevention.
- Priority is given to assistance in the living environment of the youth.

1.2 The AAJ structures in the FWB within the framework of the decree of 1991

The AAJ system is made up of public services and private services derived from the voluntary system.

1.2.1 Public services

- The SAJ (youth outreach services)
  The SAJ are responsible for what is called "non-coerced" assistance, to the extent that it concerns help accepted or requested by the youth and/or his or her family. There is one SAJ in each judicial district (there are 13 judicial districts in the FWB).

  Each SAJ is "directed by a youth outreach Counsellor and made up of a social section, an administrative section and a general prevention section. The SAJ intervene either upon request of the concerned parties, or following concerns that were communicated to the services by persons, or by outside services".10

- The SPJ (child protection services)
  Each SPJ is directed by a youth outreach Director and made up of a social section and an administrative section. There is one of them in each judicial district.

  The SPJ are responsible for what is called "coerced" assistance. This assistance intervenes in situations "where despite a real risk noted by the youth outreach Counsellor, the family of the concerned youth is not willing to adhere to the proposals of assistance suggested to them [...] the intervention of the Juvenile Court is generally required to impose an assistance measure". The SPJ is responsible for implementing the decisions of the court and, if applicable, those of the Juvenile Appeals Chamber. Furthermore, the SPJ provides support to youth who have committed an offence and for which the Juvenile Court intervenes at the protection level.11

- The IPPJ (child welfare public institutions)
  The IPPJ take responsibility for youth who have committed a “particularly reprehensible act (an act which, if it were committed by an adult, would be characterised as an offence). It is the Juvenile Court which decides to entrust the IPPJ with this youth for a determined period of time. The unifying principle of the IPPJ is a general attitude regarding the youth. Individually, the educational approach consists of highlighting the points to improve upon the behaviour, but also to point out the positive elements on which the youth can lean on to rebuild a less stigmatised personal image. It is very difficult to regain or bring back confidence after a very difficult, unhappy, or dramatic journey. This is the objective pursued by the intensive and very individual support of the youth.


The purpose of this work is really the reintegration, within the family domain first, in accordance with the spirit of the youth outreach Decree, but also from the academic and professional angle. This principle, common to the 6 IPPJ of the French Community is available in a range of highly diversified projects"\(^{12}\).

### 1.2.2 Private services

Private services receive grants and approval from the FWB. They are mandated by a SPJ (in the cases of "coerced" assistance) or by a SAJ (in the case of "non-coerced" assistance) except with AMO services (open support services) which are **non-mandated services**. This distinction between mandated and non-mandated services is important, particularly concerning the room for manoeuvre of the private services.

Generally speaking, "the offer of private services approved by the youth outreach administration responds to the following directions: give priority to prevention; give preference to the support of youth in their living environment; adapt the service rendered to the situation of each youth (rather than pointing the youth towards a predetermined category of service); and offer outreach\(^{13}\)."

These private services form a very important part of our AAJ system. In fact, there are approximately four times more social workers employed by these approved services than by the public AAJ services\(^{14}\).

There are several categories of approved services that we list below\(^{15}\):

- **Aide en Milieu Ouvert (AMO) services (open support services).** "AMO (open support services) offer preventive assistance for the benefit of youth in their living environment and in their relationships with the social environment. The AMO are **not mandated** and intervene only upon request from the youth, his or her family members, or his or her close friends." \(^{16}\)

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Les Centres d'orientation éducative (COE) (educational orientation centres). "The mission of the COE (educational orientation centres) is to support the youth, his or her family members, or his or her close friends with social, educational, and psychological support in a social-family environment, or, after the support, attaining autonomy/self-sufficiency. They are mandated by the Juvenile Court, by the Counsellor, or by the youth outreach Director."  

Les Services de prestations éducatives ou philanthropiques (SPEP) (educational or philanthropical services) "The SPEP (educational or philanthropical services) addresses minors who have committed an offence. They work with the Juvenile Court and their mission is to provide an educational response to youth delinquency by organising educational or philanthropic services for the social reintegration of the concerned youth."  

Les Services de protutelle (SP) (professional guardianship services) "The exclusive activity of the professional guardianship services is the research and support of professional legal guardians, meaning persons qualified to exercise the right of guardian, education, representation, consent to transactions and administration of the property of youth of which the relatives were totally or partially deprived. These services work on mandate from the youth outreach Counsellor." 

Les Services de placement familial (SPF) (foster care services) "The SPF (foster care services) organise the hosting and education by individuals of children who need specialised assistance outside of their family living environment, and provide the educational and social framework of these individuals. Furthermore, they work, if possible, towards the maintenance of personal relations of the youth and their family and establish assistance programs in view of their reintegration into their original environment or into independent housing. They work on a mandate from the Juvenile Court, by the Counsellor, or by the youth outreach Director."  

The Centres d’accueil d’urgence (CAU) (emergency crisis centres): The CAU (emergency crisis centres) offer a collective accommodation for youth requiring urgent and short term housing outside of their family living environment. They also develop an assistance programme to implement at the end of the accommodations.

They work on a mandate from the Juvenile Court, by the Counsellor, or by the youth outreach Director."  

1. **Les Centres de premier accueil (CPA)** (first line accommodation centres). "The CPA (first line accommodation centres) organise the accommodations for and education of youth who require specialised assistance outside of the family environment and placed for the first time or after a first placement in CAU. They are mandated by the Juvenile Court, by the Counsellor, or by the youth outreach Director."  

2. **The Centres d’observation et d’orientation (COO)** (Observation and Orientation Centres). "The COO (Observation and Orientation Centres) accommodate and educate youth who present problems or behaviours requiring specialised assistance outside their family environment and justifying through their seriousness the observation, deep analysis and a specific action aiming for the overtaking of this crisis through the management adapted for this purpose. These services work on a mandate from the Juvenile Court, by the Counsellor, or by the youth outreach Director." 

3. **Les Services d’aide et d’intervention éducative (SAIE)** (educational assistance and intervention services) "The SAIE (educational assistance and intervention services) provide youth and their families educational assistance in the family environment or in independent housing."  

4. **The Services d’accueil et d’aide éducative (SAAE)** (accommodation and educational assistance services) "The SAAE (accommodation and educational assistance services) are called upon to complete the following missions:
   - To organise the accommodations and education of youth who require specialised assistance outside of their family environment;
   - To implement assistance programs in view of the reintegration of these youth in their living environment;
   - To provide assistance to youth and families in difficulty through social-educational actions in their living environment; To provide supervision and educational and social support of youth who live in independent accommodations." 

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Les Centres d’aide aux enfants victimes de maltraitance (CAEVM) (help centres for children who are victims of abuse) "The mission of the CAEVM (help centres for children who are victims of abuse), in collaboration with the SOS-Enfants (SOS-children) teams, is to:
- Permanently organise, and if necessary, urgently, the accommodations for children for which abuse is suspected or noted;
- Offer these children specialised and multidisciplinary assistance which they need, and to develop an assistance program to implement for the follow-up;
- Provide psycho-social or educational assistance to the persons providing the guardianship of the child." 26

Les Centres d’accueil spécialisés (CAS) (specialised accommodation centres) "CAS (specialised accommodation centres) organise the collective accommodations of youth requiring urgent and specialised assistance with regard to violent or aggressive behaviours, serious psychological problems, and offences". 27

Les Centres de jour (CJ) (day centres) "The mission of the CJ (day centres) is to provide educational assistance through day accommodations and guidance of youth in their family living environment." 28

The Services which implement a projet pédagogique particulier (PPP) (PPP (particular educational project) "These services organise a particular and exceptional assistance project to youth in difficulty according to methods not set forth by specific orders, in order to permit them to have successful, original, and positive living experiences. These services can work with or without a mandate." 29

Les sections d’Accompagnement, de Mobilisation Intensifs et d’Observation (SAMIO) (Assistance, Intensive Mobilisation and Observation sections) have been put into place since 2011. "[...] through intensive educational support in the living environment of the youth, they form an alternative to placement in I.P.P.J. They address youth (boys and girls) from 14 to 18 years of age (exceptionally from 12 years of age) prosecuted for an offence." 30


1.3 Reaching the age of majority and passage into the "adult system"

The assistance granted by the youth outreach system stops at the age of majority, or 18. "The reaching of the age of majority of the youth automatically ends the assistance, except if the youth requests an extension, which can be granted to him or her, until he or she reaches twenty years of age maximum."31 But more often "at 18 years of age, whether they are prepared for it or not, whether it is their request or not, the youth are put into autonomy"32.

This passage into the age of majority is problematic because it "leads to a change in both those who intervene, and as well as the structures and the ways of thinking of assistance and public authorities responsible for this public."33

It should be noted that certain institutions and certain innovative projects propose support of youth beyond 18 years of age. It is the cases of certain AMO or, for example, of the "maison de l’adolescent" (MADO (haven for teenagers)) in Charleroi34, of Dynamo international35, and of the Solidarcité project36 (see also point 4.4 and part 2 of the report).

1.3.1 Les Centres Publics d’Action Sociale (CPAS) (Public Social Assistance Centres).

Various assistance institutions make up what we can call the "adult system" and represent the institutional interlocutors of youth when they leave the youth outreach system. An institution is however central to the extent that it is responsible for the granting of the minimum income and that it has other very varied and "first line" assistance. There are Les Centres Publics d’Action Sociale (CPAS) (Public Social Assistance Centres).

The CPAS are the public administrations whose mission is to guarantee human dignity to citizens and who are responsible for the granting of the minimum income (called "social integration income" in Belgium) to users over 18 years of age. They also grant other types of social assistance (financial assistance in matters of energy or medical bills, for example, or even in matters of security deposits, housing assistance, assistance in terms of home-based care, debt mediation services, psycho-social assistance, accommodations in a social assistance centre, etc.) The CPAS also provide social-professional integration support.

The assistance granted by the CPAS is very diverse and can sometimes vary according to the municipality in which the CPAS is located since the implementation of certain assistance is decided at the municipality level. The organisation methods of these CPAS also vary.

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31 JOACHIM, M., Comprendre les mécanismes de sorties du système de prise en charge dans l’Aide à la jeunesse, Rapport de recherche, FUSL, 2011, p.159.
33 BRIKE, X., VERBIST, Y. op. cit., p.18.
34 http://www.lamado.be/.
35 http://dynamo.dynamoweb.be/.
36 http://www.solidarcite.be/.
In this way, when youth reach the age of majority and they wish to obtain financial aid and/or social support of various natures, it is with a CPAS that they are in contact. Some youth will be there sometimes before they reach the age of majority (see the point below) and it is in this sense that an agreement protocol between the AAJ and that of the CPAS was put in place. This aims to improve the collaborations between these two systems on very specific situations concerning youth involving both the CPAS and the AAJ.

According to the different stakeholders that we have met, these collaboration frameworks are interesting and pertinent but they are not used enough by professionals of various systems and do not have enough of an impact on youth.

1.3.2 The "making autonomous" of youth starting at 16 years of age

The decree of 1991 set forth a measure regarding making some youth autonomous, in view of their situation. "This means that they leave, generally at 17 years of age, an youth outreach accommodation institution to take on their independence, especially in finding housing. The "making autonomous" is granted either by a counsellor from the SAJ (youth outreach service), or by a director of the SPJ (child protection services), depending on whether the measure is coerced or not."

During this "making autonomous", the youth are supported by social workers. They are housed in either "supervised housing", put in place by certain institutions of the system, or in an apartment of the private rental market.

Minors receive an allowance paid by the SPJ before they reach 18 years of age [whereas] youth who have reached the age of majority can request Revenu d’Intégration Sociale (social integration income) from the CPAS (minimum income). The allowance granted by the youth outreach is slightly less than that granted by the CPAS. It should be noted that certain CPAS’s grant "social equivalent assistance" to certain young minors. But this is not generalised and often results in negotiations between the AAJ and the CPAS.

The majority of stakeholders in the field and researchers who are interested in the problem of youth put into autonomy consider that this financial assistance is not sufficient considering the current social-economic context, and the price of apartments within the private rental market.

It is also necessary to emphasise that, more generally speaking, it is set forth that the institutions prepare each youth leaving from the AAJ system (therefore, even youth not benefitting from the "putting into autonomy") for their future after their exit from the AAJ system before the end of the assistance.

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38 BRIKE, X., VERBIST, Y. op. cit., p.33.
1.3.3 The use of the "EVA GOA" tool

There is a tool used and created within the context of the youth outreach, which specifically prepares youth for autonomy: the eva goa programme. It is a set of evaluation and support tools of youth who are in the process of acquiring functional autonomy. Tangibly, the tools proposed consist of:

- An autonomy evaluation scale (eva), a questionnaire which highlights the skills acquired by the youth regarding functional autonomy. It is based on the intersecting perceptions of the youth and the social worker.
- An autonomy tools guide (goa), a directory of educational files for the youth and the social workers which offers information, and gradual learning means, or experimentation.
- An autonomy logbook, a concrete record of the path undertaken by the youth and a communication tool between the youth and the social worker(s).

1.4 Reform of the AAJ system in the FWB

The preliminary draft of the decree maintains the general philosophy of the decree of 4 March 1991, concerning youth in difficulty and at risk, and the law of 8 April 1965, concerning youth having committed an offence. This AAJ reform is notably put in place within the context of the 6th reform of the Belgian State which transferred new jurisdictions to the communities concerning the measures to be taken for youth who have committed "offences".

Here are the main changes set forth by the reform:

- Prevention and support for youth up to 25 years of age
  The new drafted decree intends to make prevention a specific policy. Prevention is, in fact, for the moment, organised by the services themselves. Minister Madrane intends in this way to create “district prevention councils”, overseen by a prevention director. Furthermore, the age of the youth which could be followed by the AAJ services would pass from 18 to 25 years of age. The intended objective, with this extension of the age limit, is to permit the youth who have the most difficulties to continue being supported. The AAJ system would moreover copy its actions on those of the youth policies and the young persons' homes (social-cultural system) which already currently work with the age limit of 25 years.

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It is in this way specified in the explanatory statement of this new decree that:

“The age up to which the youth can be the subject of preventive actions is carried to twenty-five years in order to permit supporting youth who have reached majority age, in the transition towards autonomy, and in this way, to better combat the increased risk of poverty in youth and to combat the reproduction of social inequalities. The start of the adult age is in fact a complex period during which one goes through different transitions, and faces important choices: from the age of minority to majority, from studies to work, from the family home to independent life, ... The phenomenon of "adolescence" takes amplitude: more and more youth aged twenty-five still live with their parents and the border between the world of adolescents and that of adults has become more of a grey area. This phenomenon is reinforced by the increase in difficulties finding employment and housing. It is also noted that the portion of youth who are twenty-five years of age who receive public aid from the CPAS has grown significantly. It does not concern managing the youth, but counselling him or her and supporting him or her in his or her integration path in order that he or she fully implement all of these rights (housing, health, integration, professional, etc.), whether or not he or she has benefitted from the youth outreach before he or she turns eighteen years of age. However, the action of the AMOs on the field is currently met up with the age limit of eighteen years.”

Giving priority to foster care in case of placement

Just like with the decree of 1991, the new draft continues to give priority to the maintenance of the youth in his or her family environment. "However, when it becomes necessary to extract him or her from his living situation at home, the new decree would require the services to prefer care by the child’s extended family, and then a host family, before considering, as a last result, an institution”.

It should be emphasised, however, that host families are currently very few in number in the FWB and that it will thus be difficult to reinforce this type of accommodation.

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Reinforcement of youth' rights

Youth would have "for example, more rapid access to their file." [Furthermore], within the context of voluntary aid, the written agreement of the youth for such and such aid would be required by the age of 12 years and no longer 14 years [...]. Furthermore, the age from which a youth could introduce recourse against the decision of the youth outreach counsellor would be reduced in the same way." 44

Concerning the placement into the IPPJ

The Minister wishes to limit the placement of youth into the IPPJ before 14 years of age in a manner that "the maintenance of the youth in the living environment suffers from a minimum of exceptions." It will also be requested that the juvenile judge justify his or her choice (of placement into the IPPJ rather than another support measure).

Stricter conditions for the deferral of jurisdiction

Deferral of jurisdiction is the possibility for the juvenile court to defer a case file and consequently send it to the adult legal system. It is set forth that "from now on, the judge can only send the minor before the criminal jurisdiction, including the criminal courts, if he or she has already passed through the IPPJ, closed system, "and" if he or she has been prosecuted for an offence of serious violence [...]." 45

The restorative offer

"The possibility for the youth to correct his or her errors, is only currently proposed in 3% of situations. [The Minister] wishes that this track would become the priority of the juvenile judge."

43 It should be specified, however, that "the medical or psychological reports and documents sent for information to the counsellor by legal authorities" as well as "the documents concerning the personality of the youth and his or her living environment, notably medical and psychological reports, cannot be sent to the youth, his or her family and or his loved ones." This access set forth for the file thus remains quite limited.
2 CHAPTER 2 : NUMERICAL DATA CONCERNING YOUTH ASSISTED BY THE AAJ

The statistical data concerning the AAJ in the FWB is produced and analysed by an administrative department of the AAJ.

The mission of this department is to:

- Participate "in the development of data gathering, analysis, and evaluation tools and to assure the distribution of information".
- "Stimulate continuous reflection concerning the systems and tools developed for the intention of youth and families".
- It "coordinates, directs or creates research which concerns the youth outreach and that is carried out by exterior organisms (in general, university institutions)."
- It analyses the training needs of public services and develops programmes to meet them. It coordinates its action with the private training organisms.

Another service integrated into the administration of the FWB is responsible for the gathering of data and the carrying out of research in liaison with youth and the AAJ. It is the l’Observatoire de l’Enfance, de la Jeunesse et de l’Aide à la jeunesse (OEJAJ) (Childhood, Youth, and Youth Outreach Observatory)\(^\text{47}\). It is a transversal service in which the research and analysis "goes beyond" the system of the AAJ.

Concerning the AAJ figures in the strict sense, we are basing it on report no. 1 of the AAJ published in June 2014 but which is based on the figures from 2012\(^\text{48}\). More recent data will not be, in fact, available before September 2016, the publication date of the second report.

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\(^{47}\) http://www.oejaj.cfwb.be/.

The number of youth supported by the AAJ

The number of youth supported for at least one day in the youth outreach over the course of the year 2012 was 42,578 for a total of 992,772 youth over the territory of the FWB, or 4.29%. ⁴⁹

The table below indicates the breakdown by type of assistance. It must be noted that a youth may have benefitted from multiple forms of assistance during the course of the year, simultaneously or successively, or one independently from the others. ⁵⁰

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type d’aide</th>
<th>Nombre de jeunes</th>
<th>Pourcentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aide volontaire</td>
<td>28.440</td>
<td>66,80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aide contrainte</td>
<td>7.761</td>
<td>18,23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeunes ayant commis un FQI</td>
<td>2.142</td>
<td>5,03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protutelle</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0,17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aide volontaire + Aide contrainte</td>
<td>2.563</td>
<td>6,02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aide volontaire + FQI</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>0,95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aide contrainte + FQI</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>1,68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aide volontaire +aide contrainte + FQI</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>0,35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protutelle + autre</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>0,77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42.578</td>
<td>100,00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴⁹ FEDERATION WALLONNIE BRUXELLES, op. cit., p. 5.
The table below indicates the division by genre of supported youth.51

(Key of above table:
“Aide volontaire uniquement” = “Voluntary assistance only”
“Aide contrainte uniquement” = “Coerced assistance only”
“Jeunes FQI uniquement” = “Only youth who have committed an offence”
“Aides multiples” = “Multiple forms of assistance”
“Filles” = “Girls”
“Garçons” = “Boys”)

The time passed within the AAJ system
We do not have the figures available that would permit us to estimate the average time during which the youth are supported by the AAJ systems.

We can, however, supply another indicator: the average apparent duration of support which “is calculated as a ratio between the numbers of support instances available during the year and the number of admissions of youth over the year”52. We cover again this indicator for each of the structures in the table below. It should be specified, however, that this indicator is in no case indicative of the path of the youth within the system, and thus of the time during which they were supported by the structures, to the extent where as indicated above, a youth can be supported successively or simultaneously by several systems. It is more an indicator which reveals the activity of the systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of structure</th>
<th>Average apparent duration of support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IPPJ</td>
<td>7.7 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAIE</td>
<td>9.8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protutelle (Professional guardianship)</td>
<td>79.5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE</td>
<td>12.2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP which provides assistance in the living environment</td>
<td>17.5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP which provides assistance outside of the living environment</td>
<td>13.2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>25.5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEP</td>
<td>5.8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMIO</td>
<td>5.9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAAE</td>
<td>24.2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAU</td>
<td>1.4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>9.3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COO</td>
<td>6.0 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>2.4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAEVM</td>
<td>13.2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPF</td>
<td>62.4 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The average age of supported youth

An average age not being available in report no. 1, we refer here to report 0, on the basis of the 2011 figures.

According to this report,

- "The average age of youth in difficulty or at risk on 1 January 2011 was 10 years and 9 months.
- One youth in two, in difficulty or at risk, supported on 1 January 2011, was older than 11 years and 4 months (median age).
- 5% of youth in difficulty or at risk supported on 1 January 2011 were 2 years old or less.
- 10% of youth in difficulty or at risk supported on 1 January 2011 were 17 years old and over."\(^\text{53}\)

The unemployment rate of youth in Belgium
In 2014, the unemployment rate of youth was
- 32.1% in Wallonia (for a total unemployment rate of 12%)
- 39.5% in Brussels (for a total unemployment rate of 18.5%)
- 16.5% in Flanders (for a total unemployment rate of 8.6%)\(^{54}\)
- This rate amounted to 23.2% for Belgium. \(^{55}\)

The school dropout rate
"In Belgium, the portion of youth between 18 and 24 years of age having lower secondary education for a maximum level of studies, and no longer following studies or training, has been decreasing for twenty years. Although in Belgium nearly 18% of youth were concerned by a premature departure from education in 1992, that concerned 14% of those aged 18-24 in the year 2000 and **11% of youth in 2013**.

This trend is consistent with the decrease of the school dropout rate observed for the European Union (28 countries), which reached, in 2013, 11.9%. Belgium therefore posts a rate slightly lower than the European Union. Certain regional differences in Belgium, however, should be noted: youth not following any training or studies and having, at the maximum, a level of diploma from lower secondary education, represent **17.7% of the youth from age 18 to 24 in the Brussels Region and 14.7% of the youth residing in the Brabant Walloon area.**\(^{56}\)

It should also be emphasised that "compulsory education, written in the Belgian Constitution, concerns children from 6 to 18 years of age. The participation in pre-school education is therefore not compulsory. The participation rate in education of children between 3 and 5 years old is, despite all, particularly elevated in the FWB (Federation Wallonia-Brussels): 96% of them frequent pre-school. At the age of 5 years, 97% of children in the FWB (Federation Wallonia-Brussels) are attending pre-school and primary education."\(^{57}\)

The "NEET" number
("NEET" referring to youth who are neither employed, in school, or in training.)

In Belgium in 2014, Eurostat estimates this population at 159,000 youth
The "NEET" rate in Belgium is 12% and
- 14.7% in Wallonia
- 15.8% in Brussels
- 9.8% in Flanders

"Nearly six out of ten youth (59.2%), aged between 18 and 24 years old, in the Brussels and Wallonia Regions, are schooled or in training. Among the 40.8% of youth of 18-24 years of age who left the school system and who do not follow any training, half are employed (51%), and more than one third of them are on the dole (36%). If one adds the portion of youth inactive in the job market in Brussels and in Wallonia to those registered as unemployed, that number reaches 20.2% of the total of youth aged between 18 and 24 years old who do not engage in any employment and who do not pursue any studies or training within the two regions".  

3 CHAPTER 3: PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

In the FWB, social-professional integration of youth cannot be considered, in the strict sense of the term, as a mission of the AAJ institutions. One can, in fact, say that in the system in the FWB, the assistance brought to youth is considered more as overall assistance, the social-professional integration then being perceived as a part of this overall assistance.

It is necessary, however, to distinguish the mandated services from the non-mandated services (AMO). The SAJ and the SPJ do not in fact mandate the private services to carry out the social-professional integration of youth. Moreover, these mandated private services do not have specificities listed in their agreements pertaining to social-professional integration. The AMO’s, private, non-mandated institutions, can, on their part, decide to support the youth in their ISP approaches or to work with them certain aspects in liaison with this integration, such as the writing of a Curriculum Vitae (CV) or a cover letter, or even to establish a link with the Entreprises de Formation par le Travail (EFT) (work training enterprises). This more extensive work carried out by the AMO’s can also be explained by the fact that these institutions can, if they decide to and in certain cases, accompany youth beyond 18 years of age.

3.1 The link with the school environment and the system of learning

For participants in the working group that we have implemented, we cannot discuss the professional integration of youth coming from the AAJ without analysing their relationship with school. The school in fact “a place where children and youth spend a great portion of their time, and which covers multiple dimensions in terms of learning, not being limited to the content of school books.”

Moreover, certain youth have been stigmatised by the school institution. One of the persons who participated in the working group evokes the fact that the link put in place by the AAJ system can thus rapidly "unravel" by the school which does not question or does very little in relation to problems that it meets with the youth and that it directly delegates to the AAJ system.

The links with the school environment must also be questioned to the extent that, given that the AAJ institutions are addressed to minors, they are required to lead youth to respect compulsory education. Additionally, the services are sometimes mandated following the accumulation of difficulties met by the youth in terms of dropping out of school. In this way, it can be said that social-professional integration in the strict context of the AAJ in the FWB is mainly approached across the affiliation and school attendance, the school being the fundamental base of all of the ISP processes.

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We must therefore approach the Services d’Accrochage Scolaires (SAS) (school attendance services). It concerns private services from the associative system who receive grants from the FWB. The originality of these services is that they benefit from a common double approval: education and AAF.  

These services host and support minors excluded from school, in a situation of absenteeism or who are not registered in any school. They offer social, educational, and pedagogic support to these youths. The objective pursued by the SAS is the reintegration into a school structure or a training structure recognized by the educational system.

Concerning the links with the educational system, the importance of the Centres de formation en alternance (CEFA) (alternative training centres) must also be emphasised. “The alternative secondary education was started from the determination to offer youth an alternative to the forms of traditional full-time schooling. This type of education thus proposes combining general education and professional practice.”

We evoke in point 1.3.1 a collaboration protocol between the CPAS and the AAJ system. There is also a protocol which aims for the collaboration between the educational system and the AAJ established by an intersystemal decree of 21 November 2013. The school attendance and the support of orientation procedures are two of the four approaches of this decree. This decree does not create new missions for the stakeholders of these two systems. It aims to permit a better collaboration and a better knowledge of each of these systems by its respective stakeholders. One could say that it aims to break down the barriers of these two systems.

Here is what one of the professionals said about the exchange platforms put in place within the context of this decree: "The main element given at the level of the platforms is that the methods of operation and the distinct features of Education and the AAJ are difficult to assess, one from the other. The first need is thus to mutually discover one another to be able to better work together in the future. Certain headmasters also feel isolated sometimes and wish to better know what exists regarding AAJ, and to whom and how to call upon them. Another request understood within the platforms is identifying the actions already implemented - what has functioned well or less well and why - in view of sharing good practices.”

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64 « Concertation Enseignement-Aide à la jeunesse. Les avancées concrètes » Repér’AJ. Le journal de l’aide à la jeunesse, décembre 2015, p.5.

National Report – Belgium 24
3.2 The system of the social-professional integration in the FWB and in the Brussels Region.

The professional integration of youth is the subject of important questioning for each level of government and also constitutes a preoccupation for numerous social workers. However, we must also consider and therefore present social-professional integration as a "public policy system", that is to say as an action defined by a legal framework and fulfilling specific objectives. In this way, in Belgium, there is a social-professional integration system made up of highly diversified institutions and addressed to an adult public.

These organisations are located "outside of" the AAJ (youth outreach) framework. Their actions and missions are therefore not specifically addressed to youth. However, to the extent that they are addressed to a low-skilled public and in difficulty with the ISP, they make up, theoretically, ideal contacts for youth who passed through the AAJ or who left it at their age of majority.

In Belgium, employment and training are regional jurisdictions. Consequently, our description of this system rests uniquely on the Brussels-Capital Region and the Walloon Region.

The ISP system represents approximately 2,000 workers, 157 training centres and 20,000 trainees trained each year. The training proposed is very diverse and covers a "good number of fields and professions going from restauration to office and construction, care for the elderly, cultural activities or even maintenance..."

"In the broader sense, the Social-Professional Integration (ISP) system includes public and private organisms which propose actions (often training, but also mobilisation, resocialisation, orientation, etc.) for which the objective is to lead beneficiaries (always adults) to integration into the job market". "The founding principle of the system is to propose to people that are said to be the least qualified, and the furthest away from employment, training using specific teaching skills and within a flexible learning framework. The objective of the Social-Professional Integration (ISP) system is therefore to work on both the social integration and the professional integration of job-seekers in an individual and collective angle of empowerment. [...]"

We are not going to prepare here an exhaustive list of the various organisations which make up the social-professional integration system. We are simply evoking some by their missions.

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As mentioned earlier, there is a part of public institutions relative to professional integration and another part, from institutions from the private system (associative) subsidised and recognised by the Regions.

Concerning public institutions: when youth register as "job-seekers", they are lead to meet with public employment services: ACTIRIS in the Brussels Region and FOREM in the Walloon Region.

These public organisations have three main missions:
- To administratively record the fact that these persons are indeed job-seekers.
- To make the connection between the employers and the job-seekers and consequently, make offers for jobs to the job-seekers, which correspond to their profile.
- To support job-seekers in their research (by offering personalised consulting, orientation, and information services).

One should also note that the FOREM and ACTIRIS produce statistics and conduct research in liaison with the job market.

Concerning the private institutions, from the associative system, it mainly concerns training centres in different systems also offering an ISP support.

Some of these institutions use a specific methodology such as, for example, EFT "work training enterprises" which combine a theoretical approach with a profession and a putting into a real work situation through a production of goods and services or approaches with alternate courses, practical exercises, and possible internships in a company. Some institutions are approved and financed by the AWIPH (Agence wallonne pour l’intégration des personnes handicapées) (Walloon agency for the integration of disabled persons).

Finally, for ISP, it is necessary that we point out other initiatives (still outside the AAJ framework or at the edge of it), from informal education (centre infor jeunes70 (youth info centre), maisons de jeunes (youth homes)71, la plateforme du service citoyen (the community service platform)72, Solidarcité73 (see also point 4.4)) which offer youth (some of whom are in the process of dropping out of school and among them, some of whom are leaving AAJ systems), and activities which act upon their social integration with potential at the level of social-professional integration.

70 http://www.infor-jeunes.be/
71 http://www.fmjbf.org/
72 http://www.service-citoyen.be/
73 http://www.solidarcite.be/
3.3 The financial support and employment assistance for youth

In Belgium, after one’s studies, a youth can benefit from integration benefits after a professional integration internship of a duration of 1 year. For this, he or she must register as a job-seeker with the regional public services (Actiris for Brussels and Le Forem for the Walloon Region).

"Whatever the age of the youth, the professional integration internship is 310 days (1 year) for everyone. At the end of this integration internship, the youth may introduce [...] a request for integration benefits. [...] the first request for integration benefits which takes place after the professional integration internship must [...] be introduced before the 25th birthday. Since 1 September 2015, the youth who requests an integration allowance under the age of 21 years, must be in the possession of a diplôme de l’enseignement secondaire supérieur (CESS) (diploma of upper secondary education) or have successfully completed alternative training. A person who has not satisfied this condition but who has completed his or her studies which opens up these rights can introduce a new request once the age of 21 years of age is reached."

There are different types of "emplois aidés" ("assisted jobs") in the FWB, certain of which target a "youth" public.

We are not going to cite all of these types of assisted jobs. We are simply mentioning below the general characteristics of these employment assistance measures:

- Each measure targets a specific public, for example: youth less than 26 years of age, youth who have never worked, youth who are weakly qualified, youth of foreign origin who are not very qualified, disabled youth who are not very qualified, youth registered as job-seekers for 6 months minimum, etc.
- The majority of these "assisted jobs" provide advantages for the employers. These advantages can take on diverse forms: a reduction of the employer costs (in certain cases the ONEM (Office National de l’Emploi) (National Employment Office) supports a portion of the net salary, and in the case of other measures, it is ACTIRIS who supports a portion of the compensation), subsidies, reductions of employer contributions...
- Some employment assistance measures fulfil an obligation for certain employers, for example, that of engaging youth at a rate of 3% of the average of their personnel.

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74 During this internship, the youth continues to collect family benefits and is covered by the health insurance of his or her parents. Every day that the youth is unavailable for the job market extends the duration of the integration internship.

75 The integration benefits are unemployment benefits granted on the basis of studies.

Some programmes permit job-seekers to benefit from qualifying training or an internship at a company all while maintaining their rights to unemployment benefits.

4 CHAPTER 4 : "RESULTS"

In this last chapter, it was requested that we address the "results" relative to the various systems evoked, their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the issues that they raise. We chose to divide this chapter into two parts. The first part which centres more specifically on the challenges relative to the autonomy and the professional integration of the youth from the AAJ as well as the challenges relative to the systems which support these youth. The second part is more broadly construed and focuses on the issues of youth (and not specifically youth from the AAJ and employment). The objective of this second part is to put the issue of the professional integration of the youth who leave the AAJ into a broader context.

4.1 The challenges relative to the issue of youth leaving the AAJ (youth outreach system).

The challenges highlighted are derived from written sources that we consulted but also from discussions which were held within the working group implemented within the context of the research as well as discussions with two members of a working group bringing together institutions and social workers of the district of Namur around the issue of the difficulty of social integration for and acquisition of autonomy by young adults.77

4.1.1 The interruption of assistance at 18 years

As we already mentioned in point 1.2.3, when the youth reaches the age of majority (18 years in Belgium), he or she leaves the AAJ system, except if he or she requests an extension of support.

This passage to the age of majority therefore leads to a passage into the "adult system". In fact, in the FWB, except for some institutions and/or systems which chose to go beyond the limit of 18 years of age, one set of institutions addressing minors and another set addressing those who have reached the age of majority can be identified. When he or she reaches the age of majority, the youth must therefore address new institutions and is very often confronted with a new legal framework.

All of the stakeholders that we have met within the context of this research estimate that this transition at 18 years of age towards the adult system is an abrupt transition. Therefore, a study by X. Briké and Y. Verbis, emphasise that "Youth and workers agree to say that 18 years of age is too young, that they don’t have the maturity for this, that there are too many things to pay for, that it goes too fast, that it is too sudden.

They should manage their studies (getting up, going to classes, studying at home, and going to sleep on time when no one is making him or her do so!), the administrative aspects (papers, contracts, tax declaration, scholarship, registrations, health insurance, CPAS link), their health, the financial aspects (managing a budget while it is extremely tight) and the most often, finding a small job to be able to earn "a little extra".  

4.1.2 The structuring between "the social" and "the professional"

For the participants in the working group that we have set up, it is very complicated to think about a professional integration project with the youth assisted by the AAJ system or who leave this system and who must face numerous social difficulties (problems of lodging, health, family, financial, etc.).

This sends us back to the structuring between "the social" and "the professional" and more specifically within the context of the Abéona project to the structuring between the AAJ system and that of the ISP. The AAJ system works "the social" or, to reiterate what a participant in the working group stated, aims above all that these youth "become adults" and in this sense, the AAJ does not have the professional integration in its original missions. In relation to this structuring, it seems interesting to us to emphasise two extracts from the "guide for humane support of youth towards employment" to the extent where it echoes what professionals say about this social/professional link but especially because it opens interesting further reflections and permits, according to us, to go beyond this social/professional dichotomy.

"[...] Between a conception according to which it would concern resolving problems linked to the social situation prior to any professional integration approach and a conception according to which it is necessary to favour professional integration at any price finds itself an interesting space of reflectivity for professionals which permits thinking of the social and the professional in a joint manner. Although the social and professional dimensions are sometimes considered separately, the analysis of the situations of youth shows that the social and the professional are linked and structured systematically. Consequently, "although the social and the professional are linked in a necessary way, it is impossible to generally decide on the structuring of these two dimensions. The social problems must not necessarily be settled before the professional integration, and conversely, the professional integration will not be a solution for social problems for numerous youth. Here again, the place of the social and the professional should be the subject of an overall comprehension and analysis of the youth's situation. It also seems important to say here that it is necessary that the social AND the professional be supported. Refuting the social dimension or refuting the professional dimension would be an error."  

78 VERBIST, Y., BRIKE, X., op. cit., p.33.
81 DARQUENNE R., op. cit., p.24-25.
4.1.3 Networking

Along the same line of ideas, this guide emphasises that the decompartmentalisation of the systems and institutions can be a factor permitting the improvement of the support of youth towards employment\(^{82}\). It therefore proposes "creating conditions of a co-construction of public action with the ensemble of operators, permitting the possibility of symmetric and transversal partnerships, and favouring local, integrated development."\(^{83}\)

This necessity of decompartmentalisation of the systems (and notably of the "adult" system and of the AAJ system) and the importance of networking was addressed by the participants of the working group and is also listed in the research of X. Briké and Y. Verbist cited above. These two authors evoke the fact that the results of their research "[…] show the importance of networking. […] For this to be possible, it is necessary that the stakeholders have the time to meet, to think about their work together, to form, to share a common language and references, to have hindsight and to trust one another in this difficult work. It is indispensable to reflect upon a value of this work."\(^{84}\)

This importance of networking evoked by the stakeholders is based on one hand on the fact that it is important to have an overall approach regarding youth (it is notably what a system such as Maison de l'adolescent seeks, that we already addressed and which is also in part 2 of the report), and on the other hand, on the fact that the context of current public action is complex. It is in fact from a context where a plurality of systems each have their specificity and their target publics. It is therefore important for the professionals to be able to know the work of each stakeholder in liaison with the youth and their integration and be able to network around the situation of the youth (it is notably the aim of the focus group of the workers of the district of Namur aiming to create the link between the various systems and institutions).

The networking also echoes another observation made by our interlocutors: within the context of social work with the youth, it is important to keep a "common thread", to keep a connection with the youth. It is not necessary to "release the youth". However, for certain participants in the working group, when something does not function in the AAJ, the situation is dropped, and the youth is sent to other stakeholders. And this would appear to be counter-productive with regard to the needs of youth in terms of the maintenance of the connection.

\(^{82}\) DARQUENNE, R., op. cit, p 61.
\(^{83}\) DARQUENNE, R., op. cit, p 61.
\(^{84}\) VERBIST, Y., BRIKE, X., op. cit., p.63.
4.1.4 Innovative and alternative systems which move away from a "clinical" support of the integration

The "guide for a humane support of youth towards employment" that we mention in point 4.2 observes the limits of "clinical logic" in the field of integration with the youth who are the furthest from employment.\(^{85}\)

In this way, with this public, "systems that are custom-made, intensive and based on experience are essential. Although these types of initiatives exist and are developed, they often struggle to gain recognition and legitimacy and are hit with numerous political and institutional obstacles"\(^{86}\) "[...] the systems which propose concrete experience supported by professionals function well, whether they have objectives of socialisation or direct access to employment. It can concern immersion experiences in collectives, artistic projects, entrepreneurial projects, athletic projects or development projects, which permit youth "lacking a sense of direction" to reflect upon themselves, to prove their skills through recreational experiences, to think of their professional future, to be confronted with a group,...[...]"\(^{87}\).

X. Briké and Y. Verbist also emphasise that "it seems important to reflect upon and imagine qualified, recognised, and valued alternatives and which integrate, as a starting point, the concept of immediate utility and link to the employment sector for these youth for which the school does not seem to be a preoccupation"\(^{88}\).

It would thus seem that the integration of youth and more specifically that of the youth from the AAJ system must be thought across systems proposing an innovative integration approach. It is the case of the Solidarcité system (see part 2 of the report) of which the positive effects are emphasised both by the social workers supporting these youths and by the research which analysed this type of system.

Research by GIRSEF carried out upon request of the OEAJ also evokes this type of system which can provide "A biographical parenthesis that favours reflexivity"\(^{89}\).

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\(^{85}\) DARQUENNE, op. cit., p.55.
\(^{86}\) DARQUENNE, op. cit., p.55.
\(^{87}\) DARQUENNE, op. cit., p 55.
\(^{88}\) BRIKE, X., VERBIST, Y., op.cit. p.130.
4.2 The factors which can explain the difficulties of access by youth to employment

We relay here the results of a recent quantitative analysis lead by the FOREM entitled “les jeunes wallons et l’emploi” ("Walloon youth and employment"). This research targets youth in general (and therefore not specifically the youth from the AAJ system).

Generally speaking, the analysis shows that "the youth show a tendency to have more difficulties integrating themselves, and in a more concrete way, into the job market. The lack of experience as well as a lower knowledge of job seeking techniques being the factors playing to their disadvantage. The periods of economic recession make these effects even more marked for this public.”

The youth are often not very experienced and their main asset for securing employment remains the diploma. “We therefore notice that the unemployment rate falls as soon as the qualification level increases. However, the difficulties met by the youth should be put into perspective according to the level of studies. If overall, the less qualified youth experience the most difficulties rapidly integrating themselves into the job market, there is however an exception concerning the studies which prepare one to practice a trade, either technical or professional type studies, or even an apprenticeship. These options constitute a certain asset for obtaining employment. [...]”

The barriers to employment faced by youth
"In order to encompass certain factors which may prove to be "blocking" securing employment, an investigation will be carried out with referring counsellors of the Forem. The most frequently cited barriers to employment cited are: the lack of professional experience; shortcomings in job search methods; an insufficient level of studies; problems of mobility. Two profiles seem more problematic, in particular: Youth confronted with a difficult context in connection, in particular, with a material or family situation, legal issues, housing issues, availability, and mobility. Persons "far from employment" present a number of overrepresented factors falling under mental health, intellectual aptitudes, level of studies, social skills and attitudes towards the job search."
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Avant projet du Décret portant le Code de la prévention, de l’aide à la jeunesse et de la protection de la jeunesse

Bonnes pratiques de collaboration et de communication entre le secteur de l’enseignement - fondamental et secondaire - et le secteur de l’aide à la jeunesse, Administration générale de l’Enseignement et de la Recherche scientifique Direction générale de l’Enseignement obligatoire et Administration générale de l’Aide à la jeunesse, de la Santé et du Sport Direction générale de l’aide à la jeunesse,

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PART 2: YOUTH WORKER EXCHANGE – FEEDBACK AND ANALYSIS
6  CHAPTER 1 : OVERVIEW OF THE WEEK OF EXCHANGES BETWEEN SOCIAL WORKERS

6.1  Invitation Meeting & Environment

The observation week in the Notre Dame de Lourdes Institute (INDL) npa\(^1\) started with a meeting at its head office (Yvoir) with management, represented by:

- Fabienne FAUVEAUX, director of studies, INDL
- Philippe LESNE, managing director, INDL

Isabelle LACOURT from CERSO, head of the ABEONA project for Belgium, also attended this introductory meeting to formalise the induction of the French social worker, and which was instrumental in the understanding of the INDL structure, in many aspects. The first aspect refers to the history of the institution.

6.1.1  History of INDL

Mr Lesne outlined the different periods and milestones in the institute’s history. Created in 1904 by two sisters in Saint-Gilles to cater for orphans and abandoned children, INDL quickly relocated to Yvoir to respond to its growing needs in terms of accommodation capacity. These premises still exist to this day, although they are under-utilised as they only host the INDL’s management and administrative department, the largest proportion of the Yvoir premises being rented to the Red Cross to host political refugees. INDL’s current management are planning their own relocation. INDL’s identity has changed throughout the 20th century. In 1926, the institute ran into financial difficulties, resulting in a takeover by the religious community Saint-Vincent de Paul at Deinze in 1928. After it became an orphanage for girls in 1929, the institute catered for 230 individuals in 1930. This momentum was halted by World War Two, with the institute’s flight to the south of France in May 1940. The end of the war marked INDL’s resumed momentum: organisation of in-house schools (nursery, primary, special schools), structuring of activities and development of the buildings. INDL became a “city within the city” of Yvoir. The young people cared for benefited from facilities of such a scale that they could enter at an early age and leave as adults, practically without having to leave the institute’s premises. The introduction of co-education and the arrival of a non-religious director were the highlights of the 1970s. In the 1980s, with its 200 employees, INDL became the region’s number one employer.
6.1.2 Impact of public reforms on INDL

In 1988, a decentralisation process was initiated, resulting in the allocation of an independent building to every department in 1995. Simultaneously, a national heritage NPA\textsuperscript{93} was created to manage INDL’s property assets: the \textit{Saint-Vincent}\textsuperscript{94} NPA.

This NPA is not linked to the YO programme\textsuperscript{95}. Finally, with a 1991 decree extended by a reform in 1999, the new legal framework prioritises keeping young people in their family environment along with prevention, imposing the restructuring of major residential institutions. For the INDL, 2007 marked the relocation of the last accommodation service remaining on the Yvoir site to Bois-de-Villers.

6.1.3 A new management team

Finally, it should be noted that two members of the management team have been in office (newly arrived or promoted) for approximately three years, which is therefore recent in relation to the Institute itself. This team, namely Mrs Fauveaux (director of studies), Mr Lesne (managing director), and Mr Meunier (Administrative Director) are responsible for running the INDL. Their vision of the institute is defined as follows: \textit{“Autonomous services sharing the same values and mobilising their collective resources to maintain the spirit of enterprise, the pleasure of learning and address challenges”}.

6.1.4 The INDL mechanism

INDL’s beneficiaries are \textit{young people aged 0 to 18 and their families}. In terms of human resources, the institute has a total of 45 FTE employees\textsuperscript{96}. These employees are shared among (management-administrative-technical agents) or assigned to each of the four schemes, all of which are YO approved, and distributed primarily in the Namur and Dinant precincts, and secondarily in adjacent precincts. The four schemes are as follows:

- SAAE\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Haute-Pierre}
- SAAE L’horizon
- SAIE\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Le Pas} (Projet Accompagnement Sambreville or Sambreville Support Project)
- CAS\textsuperscript{99} \textit{La Courte Echelle}

6.1.4.1 SAAE Haute-Pierre

AAJ Approved Service. Intervention subject to SAJ\textsuperscript{100}/SPJ\textsuperscript{101} mandate 15 individuals cared for, both boys and girls, children and teenagers aged 2.5 to 18.

\textsuperscript{93} Non-Profit Association
\textsuperscript{94} See appendix 1, Organisational chart of all Saint-Vincent institutions
\textsuperscript{95} Aide A la Jeunesse (Youth Outreach)
\textsuperscript{96} Full Time Equivalent
\textsuperscript{97} Service d’Accueil et d’Aide Educative (Accommodation and Educational Aid Service)
\textsuperscript{98} Service d’Aide et d’Intervention Educative (Educational Aid and Intervention Service)
\textsuperscript{99} Centre d’Accueil Spécialisé (Specialised Care Centre)
\textsuperscript{100} Service de l’Aide à la Jeunesse (Youth Outreach Service)
Accommodating many children previously in the care of CAEVM\textsuperscript{102}, following specific accreditation requests made in 1999 and 2001. The establishment was created in 1995 and is still located in the village of Anhée. Accommodation is purposely welcoming and secure, within the confines of a large traditional “family” house.

The team consists of a coordinator, a psychologist, seven child care workers and technical staff. Trainees and volunteers occasionally complete the team. Coordinator: Marie DEFOY

\subsection{6.1.4.2 SAAE L’Horizon}

AAJ approved service. Intervention subject to SAJ/SPJ mandate 21 individuals cared for, both boys and girls, children and teenagers aged 2.5 to 18. Accommodation of siblings (not exclusively) from the date of the accreditation request made in 2001.

In terms of age group, extended “verticality” since 1987: living areas differentiated by age groups (2.5-6 year-olds/7-18 year-olds) with specific objectives and methods (Noziro project: ritualisation, security of the youngest population – autonomy, socialisation and family contact within the limits of the mandate for the oldest children).

This establishment is the last of the four INDL schemes which was relocated from Yvoir to Bois-de-Villers in 2007.

The children are accommodated in a specifically constructed modern and spacious building, particularly adapted to community life.

The team consists of a coordinator, a psychologist, ten child care workers and technical staff. Trainees and volunteers occasionally complete the team.

Coordinator: Rudy LEYDER

The educational project of these two SAAEs involves 4 types of intervention:

- accommodation in a group home (including specific arrangements in relation to child abuse for Haute-Pierre and siblings for Horizon)
- support for independent accommodation
- reintegration into the family
- educational aid within the living environment

These arrangements, or "projects", can be successive (e.g.: accommodation in a group home followed by reintegration into the family) or can be run independently depending on the mandate order.

\subsection{6.1.4.3 SAIE Le PAS (Projet Accompagnement Sambreville)}

AAJ approved service. Intervention subject to SAJ/SPJ/TJ\textsuperscript{103} mandate 15 individuals cared for, both boys and girls, children and teenagers aged 0 to 20.

The project focuses on two areas:

- Educational aid within the living environment, from age 0 to 18.

\textsuperscript{101} Service de Protection Judiciaire (Judicial Child Protection Service)

\textsuperscript{102} Centre d’Aide aux Enfants Victimes de Maltraitance (Assistance Centre for Victims of Child Abuse)

\textsuperscript{103} Tribunal de la Jeunesse (Juvenile Court)
- Support for young people living independently, from age 16 to 20. The service is located in Auvelais.

The team consists of a coordinator, a psychologist, four child care workers and technical staff. Trainees and volunteers occasionally complete the team. Coordinator: Pascale WILLEMS

6.1.4.4 CAS La Courte Echelle

AAJ approved service. Intervention subject to SPJ/TJ mandate

11 female teenagers aged 14 to 18 cared for, requiring specialised assistance because of their aggressive or violent behaviour, serious psychological problems, repeated acts defined as criminal offences or when the accommodation request relates to a young girl in the care of the group of public youth protection institutions.

The project of this establishment involves three educational approaches:

- Education
- Self-esteem
- Self-improvement

The team consists of a coordinator, a head child care worker, a welfare worker with a degree in criminology, an academic tutor, seven child care workers and technical staff. Trainees and volunteers occasionally complete the team.

Coordinator: Thierry RALET

Participation in the team meeting at CAS Courte Echelle

Date: Tuesday 2 February 2016, from 9am.
Location: Premises of La Courte Echelle.

In attendance: 10 members of the multi-disciplinary team including child care workers, the academic tutor, the head child care worker, the welfare worker and the coordinator.

This meeting that I attended is the regular team meeting organised every Tuesday. Major topics are systematically discussed: institutional assessment, assessment of young people and their evolution, assessment of team interventions vis-à-vis young people and collaboration with the partners as part of collective educational projects and PEI (personalised educational project), assessment of the practical organisation, monitoring of the decisions or proposals made at the previous meeting.

Firstly, as a lot of the young girls are out of the school system and therefore present in the centre, even if a child care worker is assigned to look after these girls, the presence of these girls can be an issue during exchanges between professionals (e.g.: sudden arrival of a child care worker in the meeting room concerning a young girl). Therefore the atmosphere which prevails during this meeting is focused and intense.

As the meeting progresses, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the young people from the CAS, who are being discussed, are generally far removed from the education system. The
very nature of these exchanges, in terms of topics addressed during this meeting, seems to predate any educational aspiration. So much so that the person who has the least to say during this meeting is the academic tutor. Integration only seems possible once these young people's psychological and physical problems are remedied. It therefore requires initially focusing on the individual, then on her daily surroundings, in relation to her reality. While the family and the network of partners are omnipresent, for some there are limits in terms of collaboration and coherence as highlighted in the discussions.

6.2 Field practice

**Dinner/evening, informal meeting with young people and child care workers at CAS Courte Echelle**

Date: Wednesday 3 February 2016, from 6.30pm.

Location: Premises of **Courte Echelle**.

In attendance: five young people, two care workers and the coordinator.

This period ranged from pre-meal time to the early evening, including dinner time with the young girls and the social workers on duty at **Courte Echelle**.

In the middle of the week, the objective of this period on the site of **Courte Echelle** was to examine, in addition to the educational project, the everyday, on-site reality and form an initial impression of its impact and influence on the social and vocational support of the young people cared for in this institution.

Firstly, out of the eleven girls cared for in the accredited establishment, only 5 were present that evening, as the others had run away and were therefore not physically present in the institution. I did not have the opportunity to attend the academic support session as, on the evening of my visit, it seemed that it did not take place, due the absence of the academic tutor that evening and because the schedule of the service is adapted according to the young girls' level of education (or lack thereof). The young girls in attendance had already been informed of my arrival as an outside observer at the **Courte Echelle** institution. Nevertheless, one of these young girls seemed somewhat excited, as attested by the high number of questions she asked. Before dinner, the young girls were simultaneously focused on their mobile phones (therefore in connection with the world outside the institution) and interacting with the child care workers. This can be seen as epitomising their dilemma: interacting with the child care workers or being consumed by the outside world via their mobile phone? The compulsory surrendering of the telephones before dinner was, in this respect, a fairly tense affair, which once again illustrated the anxiety over the loss of connection as well as the difficulty in adhering to rules. This difficulty in adhering to rules was also apparent when a young girl had to perform her "task", i.e. wash up the dishes for the group, a standard function which reflects her relationship with the social group of young girls cared for.

The time after dinner was devoted to activities relating to self-esteem/the body. The child care workers pluck the young girls' eyebrows and give them a manicure (nails, etc.).
This constitutes the focal point of the work on "prerequisites" to develop the ability to anticipate the social and vocational integration of young people in great difficulty with their academic experience and with institutions, notably educational, via: connections, relationships with others and their own body, self-esteem and self-confidence, notably by working on their self-image (manicure, hair removal) to help them acquire interpersonal skills and learn social codes.

Dinner/evening, informal meeting with young people and child care workers at SAAE Haute-Pierre
Date: Thursday 4 February 2016, from 6.15pm.
Location: Premises of Haute-Pierre.
In attendance: nine children, two child care workers, one trainee child care worker, the psychologist and the coordinator.

I visited this establishment from the time before dinner until late in the evening, including the meal itself taken with all the children, the two child care workers and the trainee child care worker.

Firstly, I was welcomed by the coordinator and one child before the meal. I had a tour of the premises, which were described to me as a family-type home, even though efforts are made by the institution to change the way it is perceived by outsiders. The average age of the children cared for in this establishment ranges from 2 1/2 to 18. At the time of my visit, I observed a group of 9 young people (out of 15 children cared for "normally"), as some of them were out of the establishment (end of institutional care and family time): mostly very young children aged approximately 3 to 10, except for two older children, whom I interviewed and questioned about their aspirations and the help they are given for their social and vocational integration. They were practically all wearing pyjamas at dinner time.

A peaceful atmosphere prevails in this establishment. One can feel genuine kindness towards the children, combined with a reassuring and firmly established educational environment. The child care workers remind the children of the rules relating to table manners. The "tasks" (the services expected of the children according to an established schedule: setting and clearing the table, washing up the dishes, etc.) do not seem to be questioned.
6.3 Meeting with youth workers and young people

Dinner with four young people – participatory session
SAAE l’Horizon
Date: Tuesday 2 February 2016, from 7.30pm to 10pm.
Location: pizzeria restaurant in Bois de Villers.
In attendance: four young people (3 already out of the scheme and 1 who is semi-autonomous), INDL's technical manager and INDL's managing director, who only attended the beginning of the participatory session.

With regard the overall atmosphere, a difference is palpable both in terms of how they express themselves and self-confidence. The three oldest youths, who have been out of the scheme for a few years, were more comfortable with participating in the discussions and answering the questions. The fourth young woman, who is still living in the Horizon centre semi-independently, seemed intimidated and withdrawn during the exchanges, although she came out of her shell as the session progressed.
The young people in attendance, along with the questions and their answers, are described below:

1. B***, 21, young man in care for 12 years, out of the INDL scheme
2. A***, 22, young woman in care for 3 years, out of the INDL scheme.
   Note: as she was heavily pregnant, the context influenced her answers, notably in terms of short-term social and vocational aspirations.
3. L*** 24, young man in care for 1.5 years, out of the INDL scheme.
4. K*** 17, young man in care at the Horizon centre for the past 4 months.
   For details of the questions-answers, see Appendix 1.

In short, the young people interviewed that evening strongly emphasised the work carried out prior to integration as part of the child care workers' practices that they view as positive: self-confidence, motivation, free will, interpersonal skills (politeness, manners, etc.). All this preparatory work is based on connections and the support framework essentially focuses on well-being so that they can become actively involved in their own future. Conversely, expertise, which refers to technical knowledge, vocational aspirations, is not really mentioned by the young people when they highlight the benefits of the support they have been given.

Participatory session with four young people and two employees - AMO, Solidarcité scheme
Date: Thursday 4 February 2016, from 3.30pm to 5pm. Location: AMP premises in Nivelles.
In attendance: four young people in care as part of the Solidarcité scheme, the joint leader of the scheme, a child care worker from the scheme and Mrs Lacourt, head of the Abeona project for Belgium.

104 Aide en Milieu Ouvert (Non-institutional Aid)
Firstly, it should be pointed out that this is an approved scheme which is not mandated by Youth Outreach or a Judge. Care is therefore strictly on the initiative of the young person. The scheme, and how it constitutes an experience perceived as a good practice with regard to the social and vocational integration of young people, are described below.

While the young people in attendance are vulnerable, the overall atmosphere is constructive and positive.

1. F***, 19, young man in care at AMO for the past 3 weeks.
2. D***, 25, young man in care at AMO for the past 5 months.
3. B***, 16, young man in care at AMO for the past 4 months.
4. A***, 18, young man in care at AMO for the past 4 months.

For details of questions-answers, see Appendix 2.

In short, it is clear that the young people cared for under this scheme appreciate several aspects of this scheme: the personal aspect, linked to the concrete definition of and journey towards a project, combined with a broad variety of experience. Being part of a reassuring and regulated environment, which allows for questioning, the very essence of the project. Belonging to this environment means they benefit from a socialisation approach within a group of young people as well as more generally, restoring the sense of belonging that their troubled school experience had eroded. Incidentally, the vast majority of young people interviewed view the connection with adults as THE integration solution, overshadowing all other aspects, be they academic, technical or otherwise.

Participatory session with two young people at SAAE

Haute-Pierre

Date: Thursday 4 February 2016, from 7.15pm to 8pm. Location: Premises of Haute-Pierre.

In attendance: two young people currently in care at Haute-Pierre.

With regard the overall atmosphere, the boy and the girl who participated in the session were relaxed and seemed confident, all the more so as we had dinner with them a few minutes before.

Presentation:

1. D***, 14 year-old boy in care at Haute-Pierre for the past 8 years.
2. A***, 15-year old girl in care at Haute-Pierre for the past 10 years. First of all, the two youngsters claimed to be happy with the care they receive, to feel comfortable in their host establishment.

For details of questions-answers, see Appendix 3.

In short, what was initially apparent is how young the persons interviewed were. I felt this during the interview, during which they were very self-centred, making it difficult to assess the support they receive for their vocational integration. This also complicates the vocational aspiration mechanism. An explanation for this could be their very long history within the institution, and a difficult separation on the horizon.
At this age, the developmental challenge of finding one's direction can involve processes which could complicate this separation, as these **young people seem to rely a lot on the professionals** who support them. However, in this case, I believe it is primarily a maturity issue, which echoes what one of the aforementioned young people said about a less positive assessment when he was part of the scheme at a younger age... and the ability to express themselves and reflect upon from their own experience.

**Meeting with the current academic tutor of CAS Courte Echelle**
Date: Wednesday 3/2 at 12pm
For details of questions-answers, see Appendix 4.

In short, we note once again that **interpersonal skills and therapeutic guidance** form the bulk of the professionals' work with young people in this specialised centre, while **providing a foundation** from which aspirations may emerge one day, often beyond the period of institutionalised care.

**Meeting with INDL's Head of Technical Services**
Date: Wednesday 3/2/16 at 4pm
For details of questions-answers, see Appendix 5.

In short, this interview provides a number of clarifications. Firstly, in addition to the theories on psychopathology, there is a way to support young people adopting a **pragmatic approach, through practical actions**, notably in the **early stages of integration: curiosity, desire, experimentation**. This exists in some families but is lost due to the technical nature of the professions in the young people's places of residence and the segmentation of everyone's tasks: those who "work" and those who "look after young people". **Bridging the gap between these two types of profession (personnel from corporate services and educational staff)** involved in the host institutions, is perceived as **exposure to the reality of the working world**, which is different from the world of the institution.
Interview with a child care worker from SAAE Haute-Pierre

Thursday 4 February 2016, from 8.15pm to 9pm.
Location: Premises of Haute-Pierre.
For details of the questions-answers, see Appendix 6.

In short, this exchange may suggest that the specific issue of the social and vocational integration of young people is only of moderate interest, as it is addressed, notably within team meetings, as one topic among many others; yet the child care worker interviewed highlights the very young age of the children cared for in this structure as a determinant of integration support. However, while adapting support to the age of the children is understandable, vocational integration can be worked on from a very early age in a multitude of forms. At SAAE Haute-Pierre, in terms of the atmosphere during informal meetings with the group, as well as during exchanges with the two youngsters and the child care worker, it appears that connection (the "doing with" approach and academic/technical competence assigned by the youngsters to each child care worker) and the child's well-being are prerequisites for integration used as drivers of the young person's project. This is also consistent with looking after young people's well-being, as mentioned by the coordinator of SAAE l'Horizon during our discussion.

Following the conclusions and summaries which punctuate the different exchanges with the young people and social workers from the institution, as described earlier in this report, we now turn our attention to the exchanges and interviews with the different existing or future partners of the INDL institution, whom we met during these 5 days of observation.
6.4 Meeting with external stakeholders and partners on professional integration

**Director of the Maison de la Laïcité**
Date: Tuesday 2/2 at 11am
Former academic tutor at Courte Echelle (CAS).
For details of the questions-answers, see Appendix 7.

In short, it emerges from this interview that helping young people acquire interpersonal skills, i.e. the prerequisites for socialisation, including vocational integration, is crucial. The director believes it is essential, based on the connection built over time between young people and adults, to motivate young people by adopting a supportive attitude, while helping them open their minds. And the issue of personal connections between the young person and the personnel of the institutions who take over must be anticipated so that the young person does not feel alone and lost. This reflection on support over time between several successive carers must be initiated to avoid any gaps in the continuity of the young person's development. This raises other questions: practical actions, including the "educational awareness of everyday practice" as the primary driver of integration, poor knowledge of these young people by the administrative personnel, which reinforces the lack of suitable "educational offer" aimed at this target group.

**Abaka scheme social facilitator**
Emergency care centre
Date: Tuesday 2/2 at 2.30pm
For details of the questions-answers, see Appendix 8.

In short, the Abaka structure is unique because of the small number of young people cared for (5). By way of a very personal connection, it focuses on the development of the individual, his/her identity, his/her place, which is different from the anonymity in school felt by young people. In order to integrate into a society, regardless of the nature of this integration, knowing oneself and being recognised as an individual is a key condition. The facilitator believes that civic integration should be worked on in school. This integration can also be developed via schemes such as Solidarcité which ritualise civic and vocational integration, through civic programmes and work on young people's projects. The facilitator stresses the difficulty in accessing information on applying for integration/guidance schemes, but also the disruption and connection issues caused by a succession of professionals. According to this facilitator, the social workers feel that there is a lack of knowledge about integration/guidance schemes and they should focus more on networking.
The Manager and an employee of the Trois Portes – l’Arche scheme, a Shelter and post-care support service for adults experiencing difficulties in Namur
Date: Thursday 4/2 at 12pm
For details of the questions-answers, see Appendix 9.

In short, a feedback and diagnostic problem is reported on the social and vocational integration difficulties experienced by young people coming out of the Youth Outreach schemes, between accommodation and support services for adults such as 3 Portes - l’Arche, and accommodation and support services for minors. In terms of connection, in this case the personal, individual connection that links the young person cared for to the professionals, this interview refers to the same disruption when young people turn 18 and come out of the Youth Outreach schemes.

The Manager of the Maison de l'Adolescent (Mado) in Charleroi.
Date: 5/2 at 9.30am
For details of the questions-answers, see Appendix 10.

In short, this exchange shed light on how this scheme, which was directly created by the Minister’s services, responds to a number of issues, starting with support beyond the age of majority (until age 25), including but not limited to the domain of social and vocational integration. This scheme also promotes cooperation between the schemes working on young people’s integration, as a certain sense of isolation has often been felt up until now, which is detrimental to the care process. The link between institutions is facilitated by the "common thread" and helps guarantee continuity of care.

6.5 Good practices

Firstly, mention should be made of the long-term work on prerequisites for the vocational integration of the young people cared for within the different establishments of the INDL institution visited during the week.

First and foremost, I believe that the notion of connection is a fundamental and positive practice in the vocational integration of the young people cared for within the institutions of the INDL partner.
- **Relationship with their own body and image.**

The connection with others, therefore integration in the broader sense, is only possible if one's body and image are sufficiently positive. The presence of an academic tutor within Courte Echelle was less surprising than the work on the body and image (massage, hair removal, manicure, etc.), notably with the presence of a "body" therapist within the team, who organises a relaxation workshop. In damaged young people, self-image and how to restore it to gain self-esteem and respect are key stages with a view to social and vocational integration.

In terms of work with the body, the psychomotor activity room in the Horizon centre and the work carried out in it appear noteworthy. A psychomotor therapist visits this establishment one day a week to work with the young people cared for, in accordance with a relational approach. Finally, this psychomotor activity room was described to me as a resource used to channel the anger of young people and help them make this anger, I quote, "socially acceptable".

These good practices mean that young people's interpersonal skills have an important place in the care process, resulting notably in the acquisition of social codes and therefore social integration.

Finally, I heard on several occasions during the exchanges that the well-being of young people was the primary objective. Social and vocational integration is therefore objectivised but not obsessively so. It is less a primary objective and more so a consequence of well-being and interpersonal skills which can facilitate this aspiration.

- **Connection with adults and the group**

The Youth Outreach reforms of 1991 and 1999, which notably accentuated prevention, led to longer institutionalisation periods for young people in institutions such as INDL, some of which have accreditations for children aged 2 1/2 to 18. My observations have shown that this probably has an influence on the attachment to the personnel of the establishments, which may develop and durably intensify, with all the benefits in terms of emotional security and increasing autonomy when we consider that attachment creates a condition of autonomy for these young people. This attachment paves the way for confidential exchanges on topics such as young people's vocational aspirations.

In the different INDL establishments I visited, the so-called educational distance leaves more room, again according to my observations, for authentic relationships between the professional and the child, involving social and family codes more so than the codes of the professional medical and social welfare sector.

When a young person is no longer worried about the availability of the individuals he/she has grown attached to (this long relationship helps young people acquire confidence in this availability), and knows he/she can rely on individuals he/she is allowed to grow attached to, he/she becomes increasingly open to exploration in the broad sense.
This improves their sense of security, self-confidence, cognitive availability, self-determination capacity (with a view to studying, envisaging their future career, etc.), i.e. the ability to decide for themselves what they want to do, initially in the presence of the adult mentor, and then in an increasingly autonomous manner.

In connection with the collective organisation of the different living environments, groups of young people meet regularly. In my opinion, these meetings are intended to develop the integration and socialisation capacity of young people, who find their place by becoming actively involved in a social group. In this respect, I believe these groups are a type of education, a pathway to social integration.

These groups fulfil a valuable experience sharing function, in terms of evolution, confrontation with the "outside world", "collective reflection", as not all young people have reached the same stage in their development, maturation, in various aspects.

**Caring via practical actions**

I also identified practices, such as stimulating desire, creating an experimentation context, from a very early age, which are once again important in the work on prerequisites for social and vocational integration. In this respect, the role of the head of technical services within INDL is unique, from what I have been told and have observed. As such, placing emphasis on everyday activities (washing, cooking, etc.) is essential, albeit insufficient. In this regard, it should be pointed out that the INDL establishments employ no technical staff to prepare the meals and place the orders. This is the responsibility of the child care workers, in conjunction with the young people. The head of technical services, a former child care worker in one of the establishments, has significant technical skills, which provides the children with a genuine opportunity to practice tasks related to professions they may be interested in, at least initially.

Their first attempts at practising these tasks are therefore carried out under the safe and supportive supervision of the adult, a reassuring "figure of attachment", without taking any excessive risks and with no direct consequences, which helps avoid extra pressure.

**The role of the family**

Presumably because of the aforementioned Youth Outreach reforms, the role of the family as part of the care process within the INDL establishments I visited has taken on renewed importance. During the team meeting organised in the Courte Echelle establishment or informal exchanges in the other centres, reference is frequently made to the family. The social workers I met always keep the family in mind: this seems all the more important as the children's vocational project choices can go against the family culture. Young people often seek family approval, no matter how it is expressed, of their choices in this vocational domain so that can actually formulate aspirations, in accordance with a "filiation" mechanism.
This is why the family is integrated and involved in the schooling process and other aspects relating to the child's education and lifestyle habits.

It appears that efforts are made to avoid putting young people in a loyalty conflictual situation, where they would feel "torn" between two visions of the world, that of the social worker on one hand (and its perceived social desirability), and that of their family culture on the other (insofar as the family authorises and validates their orientation choices), making any decision more difficult.

It should also be noted that the Horizon centre focuses on the accommodation of siblings, which helps reinforce solidarity between brothers and/or sisters, including in terms of social and vocational aspirations. Regular meetings between siblings are organised in the Horizon centre.

**VERIFICATION**

As the week progressed, I made sure all items of the study would be addressed and observed. This verification was carried out in real time and in agreement with the management of INDL and the head of the Abeona project for Belgium. For example, I was able to add an interview with the head of technical services, given the importance of this employee within the institution, notably in terms of work, as he is one of the few people, other than child care workers, who work within the everyday environment of the children. On the afternoon of Friday 5 February 2016, I checked that all items were in order and that all remaining questions were asked.

**CONCLUSION**

When I arrived in Belgium, I addressed the issue of social and vocational integration through a prism that focused my attention on training, the initial contact with the professional world, which ultimately constitutes the most visible facet of the social and vocational integration project. However, my week in Belgium served as a reminder of the fact that social and vocational integration is a long and complex process, and the fragility and complexity of the personal and family situations of these young beneficiaries of Youth Outreach schemes is a reflection of this.

The legal context resulting from the 1991 and 1999 reforms effectively extends the institutionalisation period and gives the INDL teams more time to address the causes of young people's difficulties. This time factor turned out to be completely different from what I thought it would be, as I was using the familiar context of the Yvelines department in France as my reference.
CHAPTER 2: VOCATIONAL INTEGRATION

7.1 How does the structure help with the vocational integration of young people

INDL includes a number of schemes, targeting different publics: young girls at CAS la Courte Echelle and young people in the two SAAE centres of Haute-Pierre and Horizon. There is an academic tutor in the CAS. Often alienated from the school system for a long time and suffering from serious learning difficulties, the teenage girls of the Courte Echelle centre need educational support with a more personal touch than the national education system can provide, less institutionalised and taking into account their socialisation problems. Vocational integration for the young people of the Courte Echelle centre is not an in-house objective, as these young girls are too "damaged" and need to work on the academic fundamentals and prerequisites (see interviews with the current and previous academic tutors from this establishment).

There is no academic tutor in the SAAEs; the child care workers deal with the issues relating to the vocational integration of young people, as well as other topics relevant to young people. According to the discussions I had with the professionals from these structures, this issue is not a priority in itself. It is one topic among many others, the primary objective being the children's well-being: "feeling good about themselves", in the words of the coordinator of an SAAE I visited. Studies are organised by the child care workers but also, interestingly enough, by volunteers who are often more technically capable than child care workers (e.g.: a former teacher at SAAE Haute Pierre). The network seems far removed from child care workers' practices. The SIEP (service d'information sur les études et les professions or information service on studies and professions) seems to be the only service regularly consulted by child care workers.

I have not received any statistics on the issue of vocational integration. As with many institutions, action evaluation is often a sensitive issue: how and what to evaluate? The discussions I had with young people, including those who are out of the institution, highlighted the work carried on interpersonal skills more so than vocational guidance or integration, although I queried these young people about these specific issues. As such, practical actions and educational awareness of everyday practices are very prevalent in the INDL. This is illustrated by the head of technical services whose educational work essentially focuses on stimulating curiosity and desire by ensuring the children discover tasks related to professions they may be interested in. More simply, child care workers strive to involve young people through practical actions but also integration into community life. As explained above, young people meet once a week, which strengthens the community integration process.

Finally, mention should be made of the disruption felt when young people turn 18, which is unanimously lamented by the workers of the different structures. This disconnection has repercussions on young people's integration as it interferes with the continuity of care initiated in the institution.
7.2 The role of social workers

INDL's child care workers are mentors, "tutors" to whom young people grow attached over time. They provide educational support, organise the evening study and build connections with the family, the school and the young person in this respect. They solicit external partners, notably the SIEP, if necessary to assist in the development and advancement of young people's vocational project. They also work as a team through the different development periods to provide the best solutions to issues relating to the education or vocational integration of the young people cared for.

Furthermore, I developed the conviction from the various interviews that vocational integration support was not a primary objective. The child care workers generally have other objectives, as attested by the fact that the evening study is partly subcontracted to volunteers and project development work is regularly entrusted to the SIEP. Child care workers liaise with them and defer to other people or schemes.

I have identified several limitations in their work. Firstly, the educational institution was regularly portrayed as poorly adapted and adaptable to the young beneficiaries of Youth Outreach schemes and to the behavioural disorders which follow them into the classroom. Child care workers are faced with a rejection problem of these young people that they can only partly contain through very strong connections with the schools and educational teams.

Child care workers are limited by time, when young people leave the institution once they reach the age of majority. As pointed out by the former academic tutor of the Courte Echelle centre, contacts change and young people find themselves dealing with an often overworked social welfare worker from the CPAS, and the close connection previously established with child care workers gives way to institutional, case management anonymity which is often detrimental to young people over 18. This seems to be one of the reasons why the Maison de l’adolescent exists, providing care until the age of 25 in a far more personal manner.
7.3 The different partnerships of the structure

**SIEPs**: There are 9 SIEPs (information services on studies and Professions) in Belgium, a resource equivalent to France’s CIOs (Information and guidance centres). They provide information on studies and professions, and propose assistance in the development of a vocational project. INDL's child care workers seem to resort to this service quite frequently to help with vocational integration and the definition of a project. It is therefore important to verify how efficient this partner is.

**SASs**: Services d’Accrochage Scolaire or School reintegration services. This scheme was created by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation to reduce drop-out rates and combat violence at school. It is intended for young minors excluded from an establishment and who cannot re-enrol, or in a drop-out, truancy or crisis situation within the school. It is also intended for young people who are not enrolled in any establishment. During the team meeting of the Courte Echelle centre, this scheme was mentioned as a relay for the young people from this INDL establishment. This establishment can be deemed as fulfilling the duties of an education body, which is important for court rulings relating to acts categorised as an offence and for which school attendance can be imposed.

Other partners focusing on integration through other means collaborate with INDL:

- **Insersport**, who organise a weekly sporting activity at the Courte Echelle centre, focusing on self-improvement and cooperation.

- **Solidarcité**, a scheme whose representatives I talked to, which advocates refocusing on young people’s personal project, involving the community and civic action.
CHAPTER 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

8.1 Young people's support needs

The young people I have met during my week in Belgium answered questions on their support needs from an unexpected perspective: that of interpersonal skills and their own motivation. With hindsight, I should not be surprised in light of how support within the INDL institution is provided, working towards well-being, seemingly taking the time to examine the root cause of the malaise or disorder, and giving young people time to rebuild their lives from the moment they drop out. I believe this is instilled in the young people, even those who have been out of the scheme for years. Technical resources or the academic background are never identified as a barrier to integration. When young people are interviewed on what should be done to help them, they reply that young people should get to know themselves better so they can build a viable project, motivate themselves to integrate and improve their social skills to gain confidence.

The issue of the connection with adults and support, notably in terms of self-confidence, is also addressed by young people during the interviews, particular those who have reached the age of majority and are experiencing the type of disruption mentioned by the coordinator of the Maison de la laïcité, when they transition from being cared for in SAAE or CAS centres to the adult world, their only contact being "a welfare worker who manages 300 case files". As highlighted by the Solidarcité facilitators, rebuilding the connection is far more difficult when these young adults are in a situation of social and vocational exclusion. This issue must therefore be anticipated by preparing them for this upheaval in terms of relationships and support they may find once they reach adult age.

8.2 Social workers' needs in terms of skills

When it comes to needs, this is what emerged from the interviews with social workers, but also with young people and partners.

Networking is a crucial factor for sharing the skills and expertise of the different partners involved in social and vocational integration support. In this regard, a form of compartmentalisation is becoming apparent. While the resources allocated to the teams may be deemed sufficient by the child care workers to perform their support duties, some of the partners I met during the week, whose involvement was of great relevance, do not yet collaborate with INDL although the management feel that the pertinence of these schemes would benefit the Abeona project.
Therefore there seems to be a misperception between the field workers who seem to believe the resources of the SIEP or SAS, or even the skills of the institutions' teams, are sufficient for helping young people integrate, and what could be interpreted as the management's awareness that other schemes constitute worthy tools or resources for the young people cared for by INDL's structures.

The majority of child care workers are not in contact with the working world. They are therefore in no position to advise young people who join the labour market via work experience, summer jobs or first posts, or tell them how to behave. Given their experience, child care workers are ill-suited to advise on job interviews or applications consistent with the actual expectations and constraints of an employer. More generally, child care workers should be supported by giving them the tools they need to comprehend the notion of otherness. This could give these young people a better understanding of others, particularly when said others are demanding employers who set the standards.

Finally, the institutionalisation period of young people, notably in the two SAAEs where they can be cared for from age 2 1/2 to 18, is an opportunity seized by the teams to work on the problems and disorders and contribute to the children's well-being, to the point of becoming the key objective. However, as pointed out by the head of technical services, the journey towards integration and the construction of a vocational project is long and requires seamless and permanent support as well as the utmost vigilance. Should this support be in sync with young people's maturity and the stage of their academic career?

The practical approach to education permeates the institution. Moreover, the opinion of the head of technical services is worth repeating, as he advocates an approach based on actually trying out professions whenever possible, supervised by child care workers (masonry, painting, etc.). This is also the opinion of the Solidarcité and Abaka workers, who include integration into the community and society in their scheme or reasoning through civic action, as part of the construction of a personal project. The role of child care worker is not limited to guiding or advising. They must be allowed to work directly alongside young people to enable them to actually try out vocational, civic, sporting, or other forms of integration.

In this respect, several effects can be observed:
- Teenagers feed off the pleasure felt by adults, in the form of practical actions, through crossed identifications, introjection, etc., to reconnect to their own desire.
- The "model" effect whereby the teenager envisages exploring a specific activity
- The "Pygmalion" effect, via an adult mentor who "believes" in the young person's ability to invest a specific activity, to explore, etc.
- The virtues of "co-action", of "doing together", etc.

Finally, the Maison de l'Adolescent takes over from institutions such as INDL once young people turn 18. The desire to bring together all partners working with young people into a giant "toolbox", notably when it comes to social and vocational integration, clearly attests to the lack of coordination in the support provided by the institutions.
These particularly dense and rich exploration and exchanges on Belgium's Youth Outreach system have opened my eyes to the differences with the French system, in both substance and form.

In terms of substance, the existence of the Social Integration Allowance given to young people from the age of 18 constitutes a "safety net". While it only amounts to approximately €700, at least it prevents young people from being terrified by the idea of ending up on the streets without any resources when they come out of schemes such as the INDL's SAAEs or CAS. It involves an approach and duration of care in the broad sense which is quite different from what we are used to in France. The work of the INDL teams is very much focused on well-being, which creates the prerequisite for social and vocational aspirations. I appreciated some of the approaches used, such as the presence of a "body" therapist at CAS la Courte Echelle or of a psychomotor therapist at the Horizon centre, in an effort to help young people deal with their own body and emotions.

In my opinion, the pragmatic vision of desire stimulation and vocational discovery embodied by INDL's technical manager largely exceeds the "doing with" approach to education of the child care workers. I believe that these young people, who sometimes struggle to express themselves, should experience for themselves the professional sectors they are interested in for their future.

The inclusion of the families of the young people cared for also features strongly in the interviews and in the care provided by INDL, including in relation to the definition of a professional project as well as social and vocational integration. Becoming actively involved in their own future with the reassurance of the family's explicit or implicit approval of their choices is only possible when the teams are in contact with the family as part of a serene collaboration approach.