

National report

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AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE
TO CARE LEAVERS' PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION



FRANCE

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PART 1: NATIONAL CONTEXT AND INFORMATION

1 THE FRENCH CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

1.1 History

In France, the child protection system has been organised since 1945 around a body of magistrates and specific child protection measures (juvenile court and juvenile court judge, social inquiries, measures for the placement into care of minors, etc.). The child welfare policy was established in 1953 and reinforced circa 1958. Every French department was equipped with a child welfare service (ASE or *aide sociale à l'enfance*).

In the 2000s, a number of public reports highlighted the lack of knowledge of the child protection domain and policy: limited information systems, limited references in terms of the various practices and intervention methods, little or no evaluation. There was a growing need to implement observation, study and development initiatives in this domain: the *Observatoire national de l'enfance en danger* (ONED or National Monitoring Centre for At-risk Children) was created in 2004. Its 3 principal tasks are to:

- **Improve knowledge** of issues relating to the endangerment and protection of minors
- **Inventory, analyse and disseminate prevention and intervention practices**
- **Support those involved** in child protection.

It also supports child protection policies.

1.2 Legal framework

There are 2 separate components of child protection:

- **The *Aide sociale à l'enfance (ASE or Child Welfare)***, defined by the French Social action and family code, is managed in a decentralised manner by departmental councils (directorate of departmental solidarity, associations, approved establishments and specialised youth workers). Its primary task is to help minors, young adults and their family via initiatives in terms of individual or collective prevention, protection and the fight against abuse.
- ***Protection judiciaire de la jeunesse (PJJ or Judicial Protection of Youth)*** refers to the French civil code and is managed by the ministry of Justice (State) via the juvenile court judge and the Public Prosecutor. It implements the provisions of the Order of 2 February 1945 on juvenile delinquency, and monitors the measures imposed on minors by a magistrate.

There are several types of measure leading to the placement into care of minors and young adults:

- › **Administrative measures** cover initiatives in terms of individual and collective prevention as well as protection and the fight against abuse. Therefore, when the child cannot remain in the care of his/her family, he/she is entrusted to the *Aide sociale à l'enfance* at the request of the parents or by decision of the judicial authority. He/she is then cared for by a foster family or in a specialised institution. This represents one quarter of the measures leading to the placement into care of minors and young adults.
- › **Judicial measures** are ordered by the juvenile court judge, under the auspices of the management and services of the Ministry of Justice, following a report, a direct request from the children or relatives. The ASE defines the placement procedures, and parental authority can be delegated to a third party or partially forfeited.
- › **Direct placements** are decided by the judge, and the child is directly placed into an institution or with a trusted third party, with delegation of parental authority.

Judicial measures and direct placements represent more than 70% of the measures leading to the placement into care of young people.

Also noteworthy is the existence of educational actions at home or in a non-institutional environment, making it possible to supervise young people while letting them live within their usual family environment.

From a legal point of view, the child welfare system was recently reformed by the law of 5 March 2007, which stipulates that the objective of child protection is to prevent any difficulties that parents may encounter, support them and, if necessary, guarantee, in accordance with adapted arrangements, full or partial placement into care of minors. The reform aims at improving the effectiveness of these services by focusing on enhanced prevention, the importance of adapted and diverse schemes, and the clarification of child protection tasks.

The objective is generally to keep the child in his/her family environment through educational measures at home, the support and supervision by social workers, or the payment of financial allowances. If however placement in a foster family or specialised institution is required, the conditions are adapted to everyone's needs: emergency care, day care only or long-term care within an appropriate structure.

The care provided by child protection is also intended for young adults under 21 who experience difficulties likely to compromise their social or professional equilibrium. These young adults can ask for the extension of ASE care to benefit from educational support, accommodation, psychological assistance and sometimes a financial allowance, after they turn 18. This scheme, known as "young adult contracts", allows young adults and emancipated minors to live almost independently and avoid disruptions whenever possible.

The contract they sign with the ASE service defines specific objectives in terms of social and vocational integration, as well as practical means of implementation. Vocational integration and promoting autonomy remain the key priorities of this type of contract.

Regarding the funding of child protection measures, ONED estimated the expenditure relating to the placement in institutions or foster families at €5.7 billion in 2013. The departmental councils finance virtually all child protection measures within their territories.

1.3 The different care facilities

There are a variety of structures catering for minors and young adults under the child protection scheme, in terms of the type of audience catered for, placement conditions and support provided to young people.

These include 2 major forms of accommodation: placements in foster families and placements in institutions under the control of the ASE or non-profit associations, approved and financed by the ASE. Approximately 51% of the young people are placed in foster families and 39% in institutions.

The child welfare scheme involves several types of structure, most of which are financed by the departmental council concerned :

- **Child welfare homes cater for both troubled minors and young adults entrusted to the ASE service.** Following an observation period, these young people can be redirected towards foster families or MECS (see below), the objective being to prepare for their social and vocational future and possible reintegration into their family.
- **The *Maisons d'enfance à caractère social* (MECS or social welfare centres for children)** are social or medico-social institutions specialising in temporary care for troubled minors, full board or in non-institutional homes if these minors attend school. MECSs are notably for young people in cases of domestic violence, psychological problems or addiction of the parents, educational deficiencies and behavioural problems, etc. They can also take in unaccompanied foreign minors.

In both types of structure, young people can also live independently in shared apartments located inside or outside the structure. With these apartments, young people can be supported as they gradually learn how to live independently, continuing to be regularly monitored by youth workers to assess their social, vocational and educational development.

- **Foster families help care for a minor in a family other than his/her own**, to resolve the family dysfunctions that put him/her in danger. The objective is to help young people thrive while maintaining family ties and facilitating, whenever possible, reintegration into their family. They are supervised on a daily basis by specialised services and a multi-disciplinary team.

Other forms of accommodation are worth mentioning, even though they are less common, catering for only 10% of the young people cared for. They have however been used increasingly often over the past few years. They include independent apartments for autonomous teenagers and young adults (with regular visits from a youth worker), boarding schools, children's villages, placements with a trusted third party or placements in the future adoption family.

There are also structures specialising in day care for young people who do not need permanent support (specifically dedicated to non-institutional educational actions), and institutions adapted to specific audiences, e.g. young mothers, minors with disabilities, etc.

Among the *établissements de placement éducatif* (EPE or educational placement institutions) of the judicial protection of youth, there are several types of structure:

- › **the *unités éducatives d'hébergement collectif*** (UEHC or collective accommodation educational units) care for minors under legal guardianship in emergency or planned care.
- › **The *unités éducatives d'hébergement diversifié*** (UEHD or diversified accommodation educational units) involve several types of individual accommodation solutions in collective structures (homes for young workers, social housing centres, etc.) and foster families. The idea is to find a fair compromise between the need to support young people and promoting their autonomy.
- › **Closed educational centres** are designed more specifically for minors who have committed offences. This is an alternative to incarceration for young people under judicial supervision, who have been given suspended sentences with probation, following a work release or conditional release.
- › **Reinforced educational centres** cater for minors with a view to removing them from their usual environment and lifestyle, to prepare them for their social and vocational integration as part of a collective framework. They benefit from an intensive programme of activities and permanent educational supervision.

In all these structures, young people benefit from the support of the on-site educational teams. These young people are most often assisted with social issues such as education, health, housing. Psychological support can sometimes be more intense depending on young people's problems.

1.4 The issue of vocational integration

While vocational integration is sometimes the logical follow-on from education and training issues, it is not always a primary concern for care facilities, the purpose of which is to remedy the most urgent problems in terms of the socialisation of troubled youth.

During the period of care, the vocational dimension of support is often insufficient and relegated to second place by the educational teams of the care facilities, dealing with other priority themes: socialisation, accommodation, health, finance, etc.

For example, the French government encourages aid for young adults, for whom vocational integration is a fully fledged objective. Nevertheless, the support measures implemented at departmental level vary depending on the territory. This aid generally focuses on the same "material" aspects of life, and often takes the form of a financial allowance and the provision of accommodation.

Youth workers are often underqualified in this issue and do not always have the resources and tools they need to work with young people on long-term projects: lack of time, specific skills, professional network, etc. Child protection services often assume they do not have the training required to implement support measures for young people on the issue of vocational integration. Depending on the territory, different types of partnership with specialised organisations are being developed to provide youth workers with extra help.

To improve the guidance and vocational integration of this particularly vulnerable youth category, it is now critical to improve coordination between child protection schemes and labour market integration schemes. Autonomy is a key aspect of social and vocational preparation which begins before young people leave the schemes, so that they can commit to a vocational integration approach, be advised on career guidance and preserve continuity between childhood and adulthood.

2 YOUNG PEOPLE CARED FOR BY THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM – PROFILES AND DATA

In France, ONED (*Observatoire national de l'enfance en danger*) was created to examine the child protection sector and analyse the data, with a view to improving services and national policy guidance.

However, due to the decentralised management of child protection services (child welfare in the departments; judicial protection of youth at State level), it is difficult to rely on sound and representative data on a nationwide scale. The statistics of the *Direction de la recherche des études and évaluation and statistiques* (DREES or Directorate for research, studies, evaluation and statistics) however provide insight into the trends.

2.1 The figures of Child Welfare and Judicial Protection of Youth

As of 31 December 2013, more than 300,000 young people were in the care of child protection in France, all measures combined¹:

- More than 285,000 minors, i.e. 2% of young people under 18
- More than 21,800 young adults, i.e. 1% of the 18-21 year-old population

In 2014, the ministry of Justice put the number of minors at risk appearing before a juvenile court judge at just over 107,600, and the number of minors supervised by a juvenile court judge (excluding judicial assistance measures) at 229,264.

The placements of young people outside their family environment represented 50% of all measures taken by the ASE at the end of 2013, i.e. 154,000 young people placed into care. These are mostly judiciary measures (68%). Only 22% are administrative measures, and 10% direct placements by a judge².

While the average age of young people put into the care of the ASE is 12, the duration of care varies dramatically. Many factors are involved: whether or not the child returns to his/her family, the medical and social problems encountered, runaways, etc. Around half of the young people cared for are pre-teenagers and teenagers aged 11 to 17. Young adults account for 13% of the young people cared for by child protection.

It should be pointed out that, in France, care automatically stops when the young person turns 18. It can however be extended until he/she turns 21, via "young adult contracts".

¹ <http://www.oned.gouv.fr/chiffres-cles-en-protection-lenfance>

² <http://drees.social-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/dt-statistiques-196.pdf>

There is a slight majority of boys among the young people cared for (56%) compared with girls (44%).

2.2 Difficult school education and vocational integration

Few statistics are available on the education and vocational integration of the young people cared under the child protection scheme.

However, national figures on youth employment are alarming, and the compounding social and vocational difficulties faced by young people under the child protection scheme are arguments for considering them an extremely vulnerable category.

Generally speaking, the unemployment rate of young people in France was 23.4% in 2014, which represents approximately 630,000 young people without a job³. Furthermore, unemployment tends to affect young people with little or no qualifications: the employment rate of young higher education graduates 3 years after they completed their studies was 80%, compared with 30% for young people with no qualification⁴ (lower secondary school level) in 2013.

Moreover, while it remains difficult to assess the number of young 15 to 29 year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET⁵) in France, it is estimated at nearly 2 million, i.e. 17% of this population category. The school drop-out rate is one of the many factors likely to aggravate youth unemployment: around 140,000 young people on average leave the education system without a qualification. The number of unqualified young people is currently estimated at 900,000⁶.

The difficult family and social situation of young people placed under the child protection scheme affects their education⁷.

At age 15, these young people are 3 times more likely to drop out of school than other teenagers of the same age. They most often drop out of school during the year they are placed in care, as a result of the change of lifestyle, the lack of privacy inherent in community life, and more complicated individual management for the youth workers. However the school drop-out rate tends to decrease the longer the person stays in the institution, which shows that young people can manage to find their balance within their institutions.

³ http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?reg_id=0&ref_id=NATCCF03338

⁴ <http://www.cae-eco.fr/IMG/pdf/cae-note004.pdf>

⁵ NEET: not in education, employment or training

⁶ <http://www.cae-eco.fr/IMG/pdf/cae-note004.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.data.gouv.fr/fr/datasets/echec-et-retard-scolaire-des-enfants-heberges-par-l-aide-sociale-a-l-enfance/>

In 2008, 15% of the 16 year-olds placed in a care institution were out of the education system. This figure rises to 27.5% for 18 year-olds and 44% for young people aged 21 and over⁸. The school drop-out rate increases with the age of young people in care.

This is notably explained by the pre-existing learning difficulties and lack of education of young people (absenteeism and dropping out concerns 14% of the 15 year-olds who attend school and are placed in an ASE institution) and the end of compulsory education at age 16.

Many young people however leave school and remain inactive. On average, 47% are out of work, 34% are in work experience or engaged in vocational training, 3% are employed and 16% are looking for work.

There is also a strong tendency for 15 year-olds to favour short studies and vocational courses: as care comes to an end when they turn 18, they need to quickly become financially independent. A 2008⁹ survey shows that, among young people placed in care:

- 20% are in lower secondary education (*collège*)
- 4.7% are in general and technological upper secondary education (*lycée*)
- 1.8% follow a vocational *baccalauréat curriculum*
- 0.7% are in higher education
- 14.5% follow vocational courses (BEP, BEPA, CAP, CAPA)
- 14.3% have dropped out of school.

By way of comparison, while only 5.3% of the 15 year-olds placed under the child protection scheme are in upper secondary school, this figure is 49% on average for all 15 year-olds. Young people placed in care are 2.5 times more likely to follow a vocational course.

The percentage of young adults placed in care that drop out of school is not higher than the rest of the population of their age, which can be explained by the terms of the "young adult contract": to benefit from the extension of care, young people commit to achieving predefined objectives, which most often include attending school.

The particular case of young people under the child protection scheme is somewhat reminiscent of that of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are also more inclined to pursue short studies or leave the education system without any qualification. Several factors can explain the vocational integration crisis which affects the most vulnerable young people: economic and financial crisis, lack of educational and vocational guidance, increasingly precarious labour market, decrease in recruitment, failure of the education and training systems to adapt to the changes in the employment market, etc.

Many young people need support to facilitate their vocational integration. Yet, this support still remains sometimes limited. Out of the 16 to 25 year-old population, only 5.7% are

⁸ <https://www.data.gouv.fr/fr/datasets/echec-et-retard-scolaire-des-enfants-heberges-par-l-aide-sociale-a-l-enfance/>

⁹ <http://www.drees.sante.gouv.fr/IMG/xls/er845.xls>

initially cared for by local agencies and PAIOs (*Permanences d'Accueil, d'Information and d'Orientation* or Youth reception, information and guidance centres), and this figure drops down to 2.5% for unqualified young people¹⁰.

In 2008, only 11% of young people with little or no qualifications supported by local agencies and PAIOs had at least one monthly interview, and 50% only had 3 interviews over one year¹¹.

Young people cared for under the child protection scheme are more vulnerable than others, due to the compounding social and vocational difficulties they face. When their care period expires (when they turn 18 or 21 if they have a young adult contract), they do not have access to all legal schemes (RSA or active solidarity income, allowances, etc.), which only apply to people over the age of 25. They are often left without resources and the risk of social and vocational disconnection is significant.

2.3 The case of Unaccompanied foreign minors (UFM)

It is worth mentioning the specific case of unaccompanied foreign minors (UFM). These minors are automatically cared for by the ASE services in each department. Over the past few years, the arrival of these foreign minors has been compounded by the instability of the geopolitical context. Some departments are faced with a greater influx than others, for example in the North of France, the gateway to the UK for many migrants. As a result, access to the child protection scheme is becoming congested.

In 2015, the Paris ASE estimated the number of unaccompanied foreign minors within its territory at 1,900, versus 700 at the end of 2008¹². To stabilise these numbers, it would be advisable to spread these minors across the French territory and guide them towards a location other than their place of arrival, while maintaining quality reception and care.

¹⁰ INSEE, Proportion of young people initially cared for by local agencies and PAIOs, in 2013

¹¹ <http://www.cae-eco.fr/IMG/pdf/cae-note004.pdf>

¹² <http://www.senat.fr/rap/r13-655/r13-6552.html>

3 THE VOCATIONAL INTEGRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN FRANCE

As mentioned previously, young people are faced with a number of difficulties in terms of access to employment. Young people cared for by the child protection scheme are plagued by many obstacles to their vocational integration.

In France, the unemployment rate of young people is generally close to 15%, with regular peaks at 20%. In the summer of 2015, the unemployment rate of young people was 24.5%¹³.

There are several factors involved:

- Economic and financial crisis since 2008
- Increasingly precarious employment market
- Failure of the education and training systems to adapt to the emerging needs of a constantly changing employment market
- Difficulties for public employment services in providing vulnerable populations with sustainable solutions
- Paradox between the need for specific skills on the employment market and young people's lack of qualification

For a long time, France's youth employment policy followed two major directions: reducing youth labour costs and improving training. The notion of support with a view to employment emerged in the 1980s.

Since then, numerous schemes have been created to support the vocational integration of young people.

3.1 Institutional mechanisms for youth employment

Numerous schemes have been put in place in France, according to two distinct yet complementary approaches. The first approach is to take action upstream of vocational integration by improving the training and qualification of young people and guiding them more effectively towards their first job, through public employment services and guidance structures. The second approach applies to the employment market itself and its stakeholders: businesses are encouraged to recruit by lowering youth labour costs.

¹³ <http://www.touteurope.eu/actualite/le-taux-de-chomage-des-jeunes.html>

➤ Training and support schemes

To improve assistance for young people by responding to their vocational integration needs, several schemes complement the usual education system.

This involves preparing them upstream of vocational integration by initially focusing on guidance and preventing them from dropping out of school. This is why France has recently implemented a *public regional guidance service*, the purpose of which is to coordinate the different stakeholders and, more importantly, to support youth guidance more effectively.

In addition, young people who are faced with a number of obstacles (social hardships, home life, health) are more inclined to leave the school system early. The French Government launched a *campaign to combat early school leaving* to ensure that all unqualified and unskilled 16 to 25 year-old young people are entitled to return to education. Many measures intended to prevent and combat absenteeism were reinforced, and many people were involved in bringing young drop-outs back to a training programme or vocational support. France's ambition is to cut the number of unqualified young people by half.

Furthermore, vocational experience constitutes genuine added value when training young people. *Work experience and apprenticeship courses* provide rewarding experience which helps build bridges between education and employment, thereby facilitating the vocational integration of young people. More than 70% of young apprentices find sustainable employment soon after they complete their training.

International mobility is also a considerable asset, even though the costs associated with this experience abroad are often too excessive to allow young people from more modest backgrounds to take advantage of this opportunity.

Schemes are also available to provide young people who have left the school system with an educational framework and develop their social and vocational skills, with a view to reinforcing their autonomy and vocational integration. This is true of the *Écoles de la 2^{ème} chance* (Schools of second chance) or *EPIDe (établissement public d'insertion à la Défense* or Public organisation for social inclusion in the La Défense district). The *adapted military service* is also a recent development: voluntary military service centres giving young people access to vocational training courses consistent with local needs and short-staffed sectors, to guarantee their rapid vocational integration upon completion of the course.

Finally, *local agencies and PAIOs (Permanence d'accueil, d'information and d'orientation* or Youth reception, information and guidance centres) are public employment service entities designed to guide young people towards employment by taking into account all types of obstacle they may face: housing, health, education, social environment, etc. For example, young people can sign a *contrat d'insertion dans la vie sociale* (CIVIS or social integration contract) with the local agency, allowing them to benefit from assistance in their search for employment, the creation or takeover of businesses, and sometimes financial aid.

Local agencies also provide the *Garantie Jeune* (Youth Guarantee), France's response to the European Youth Guarantee launched by the EU. The objective is to provide young people with extensive guidance, particularly those in the NEET category aged 18 to 25, in relation to education and employment, in addition to the payment of an allowance during unemployment periods.

Over the past few years, external service providers such as associations have assisted local agencies and PAIOs.

› Subsidised employment schemes

To reduce the cost of youth labour and encourage businesses to create jobs, many subsidised contract schemes have been initiated. While each of these schemes has its own provisions, they all target troubled youth to facilitate access to a first work experience.

- **The *contrat de génération*** (generation contract) was created in 2012 in response to two specific objectives: vocational integration of young people and job retention for older employees. This scheme encourages the transmission of knowledge and skills within businesses, and small companies can benefit from financial aid from the State.
- **The *Civic Service*** has also proven itself in terms of youth integration. Initially intended for young people under 25 who have dropped out of school, this scheme currently allows all young people aged 16 to 25 to engage in a general interest assignment and benefit from vocational experience with no qualification requirements.
- **The *Emplois d'Avenir*** (Jobs for the Future) respond to young people's expectations in terms of stability and sustainable integration. They aim at developing the vocational experience of young people aged 16 to 25 with little or no qualifications, and enable them to acquire skills by giving them access to a short-term or longer 1 to 3-year employment contract. These young people are most often confronted with social and vocational problems. The State finances part of the young person's salary, and the employer commits to supporting him/her and allowing him/her to take training courses. These Jobs for the Future generally concern social utility or environmental protection structures, with long-term employment opportunities.
- **The *contrat unique d'insertion*** (CUI or Single integration contract), *contrat d'accompagnement à l'emploi* (CAE or employment support contract) and *starter contracts* are targeted at young people under 30. They combine education with social and vocational guidance for the beneficiaries, and financial aid for the employer.
- With ***Insertion par l'activité économique*** (Integration through economic activity), troubled individuals far removed from the labour market can benefit from enhanced guidance in relation to employment in specialised structures, for a period of up to 2 years.

Thanks to the combination of social guidance and adapted employment, young people who have trouble fitting in socially and vocationally can develop their autonomy and progressively integrate into the labour market. The facilities accommodating these reintegrated employees are contracted by the State and receive financial aid.

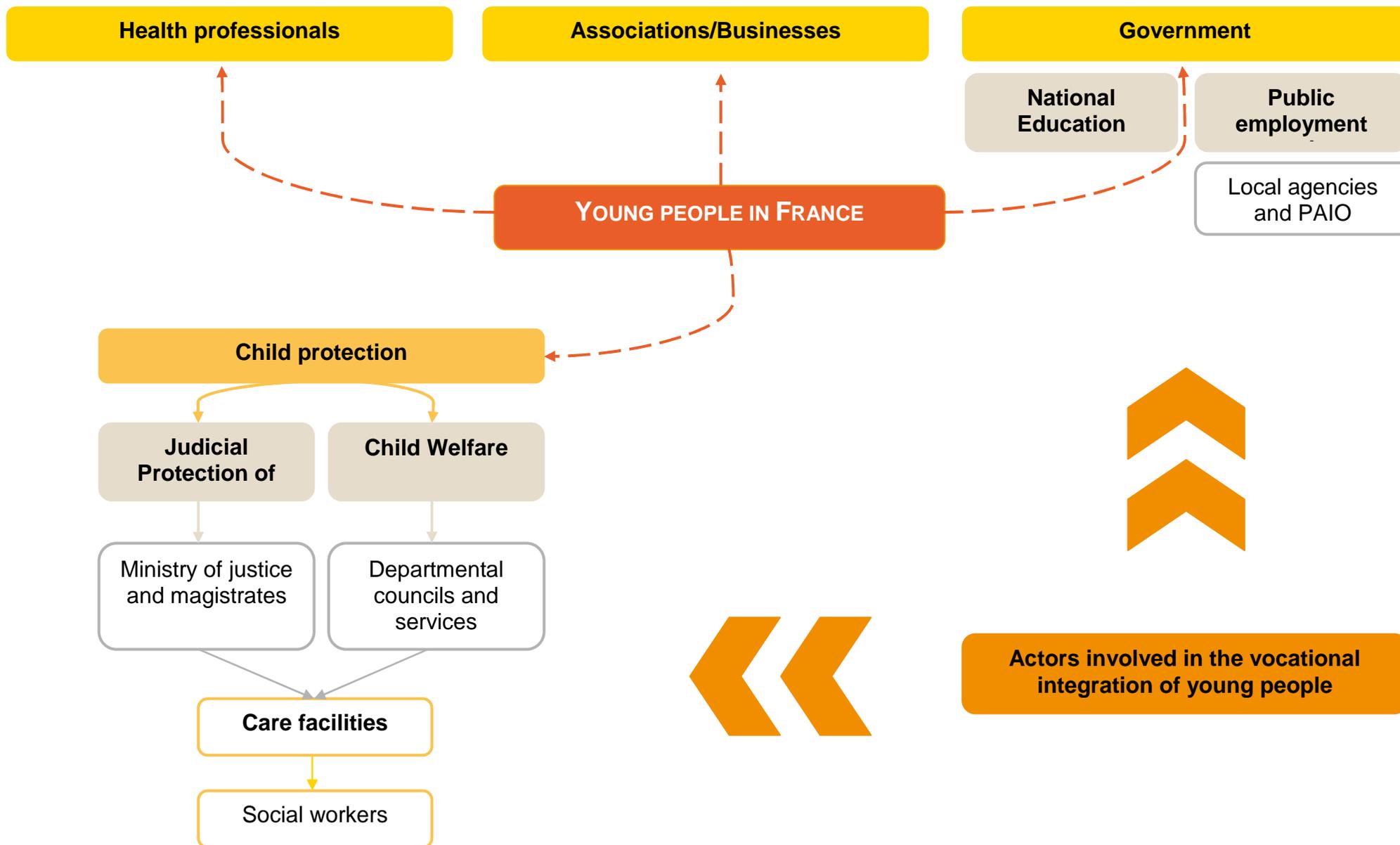
While these numerous institutional schemes have enjoyed mostly positive results over the past few years, they do have their limitations. Many local associations, businesses and authorities have launched their own initiatives to support the vocational integration of young people, targeting a specific territory or young people with specific issues. Therefore, the young people cared for by the child protection scheme are sometimes involved in a specific social and vocational support and guidance project. These initiatives however do not yet cover the entire national territory, and are generally of a one-off nature.

3.2 The different stakeholders

Numerous stakeholders work with young people, whether or not they are cared for under the child protection scheme. These include the French State via numerous public institutions such as the Ministry of National Education, but also associations specialising in youth issues, health professionals, businesses, etc.

These stakeholders are also involved in the field of vocational integration of young people. However, their actions vary and are not always complementary. The major challenge now is to coordinate these different stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of the partnerships and schemes.

For young people cared for by the child protection scheme, the ASE and PJJ services along with the social workers who deal with them on a daily basis have a key role to play with regard to their educational guidance and vocational integration. Once again, however, the actions are too variable and inconsistent according to the territory and the stakeholders' involvement.



4 CONCLUSION

A number of points can be raised regarding the child protection system in France, as well as the vocational integration of young people, particularly that of young people in care.

4.1 The difficulties with the child protection system

According to a recent report from the Social Affairs Commission¹⁴, the child protection system could be improved in many ways.

› Insufficient observational data

Following interviews with the different people involved in this sector, we notice there is little information available on child protection in France. The knowledge of the young people cared for remains limited, as a result of the lack of accurate and reliable data. For example, ONED can only estimate the number of minors and young adults cared for by the child protection system, by reconciling data from different services. The absence of specific notions, fixed nomenclatures, common methodologies and shared IT tools contributes to the fragmentation of the information. Certain schemes are not accounted for such as protective measures for young adults.

These difficulties are heightened by the disparities between the territories. The departments play a focal role in child protection, but the implementation process sometimes varies from one territory to the next. For example, the terms of the young adult contract are left to the discretion of the departmental council: home help, involvement of a youth worker, financial aid, accommodation, etc. Certain schemes have different criteria from one territory to the next, and the departments also develop their own mechanisms.

It is clear that the observation system in France remains insufficient and the quality of information is inconsistent, despite the recent reform of 2007 which stipulates the creation of departmental observatories to improve feedback. Once again, however, the resources vary depending on the territory.

The report also highlights the lack of large-scale initiatives to examine the trajectories of children placed under the child protection scheme. Yet, to improve services, it is essential to study the young people entering and exiting the schemes, the combination of measures, the discontinuation of care, etc.

¹⁴ <http://www.senat.fr/rap/r13-655/r13-6552.html>

Only one recent study¹⁵ on the long-term outcome for children placed in care reveals that the "understanding of the heterogeneous nature of evolutions, from best to worst, would provide an overview of the considerable improvement potential of the French child protection system".

› **Problematic implementation**

Those involved in child protection also stress how young people's changing needs and the emergence of new issues affect the quality and coherence of the actions undertaken.

The ASE is faced with a number of difficulties: young people increasingly often suffer from great hardships, serious precariousness or poverty. Their care is therefore more complex. Moreover, in view of the limited resources of services such as child psychiatry, the rising numbers of unaccompanied foreign minors, and the PJJ's recent withdrawal from educational assistance, the ASE's mission is becoming more and more complex in the absence of appropriate resources and skills.

Also, the multiplication of schemes, the diversification of responses to the problems of young people and their families, combined with the influence of territorial resources on the implementation of actions, makes it difficult to understand and interpret child protection measures. Harmonising these measures and resources is a necessity to facilitate the implementation of child protection measures in France.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that partnerships are underdeveloped. The multitude of stakeholders and actions contributes to the compartmentalisation of the fields of intervention. However, the objective of the 2007 reform is to enhance collaboration and complementarity among stakeholders with a view to improving their effectiveness.

› **Decrease in funding**

The 2007 reform helped create a National child protection financing fund (FNFPE) to support the departments and finance specific projects. The FNFPE is endowed by an annual payment from the *Caisse nationale d'Allocations Familiales* (CNAF or National family allowances fund) and the State.

Unfortunately, as a result of the economic crisis, the FNFPE is facing serious difficulties. In the absence of further State resources, and following the allocation of the available budget over 3 years instead of one, the fund now solely relies on a significantly reduced sum compared with the annual expenditure of the departmental councils.

¹⁵ Study coordinated by Dr. Daniel Rousseau. France's first longitudinal survey of the long-term outcome for children placed in care, analysing the biographies of 128 children, the initial results of which were published in January 2014.

The reduced funding options are a clear obstacle for the departmental child protection services. Numerous schemes are affected, such as the young adults' contracts which the departments are less inclined to renew.

These difficulties have consequences on the vocational integration of young people, and on the resources implemented to assist young people with their vocational guidance and autonomy.

4.2 Inadequate vocational integration support

The vocational integration of young people is currently a major concern in France and the European Union. While numerous schemes have been put in place to support young people's vocational projects in general, and to bring the education system and the working world closer together, these schemes remain obscure and limited.

Furthermore, over the past few years the population has had a tendency to steer clear of the institutions, deemed to be ineffective. A very strong territorial approach is emerging, involving a multitude of initiatives and the work of local stakeholders to help young people in specific territories.

The issue of vocational integration and the development of autonomy for the young people cared for under the child protection scheme is proving to be a multifaceted challenge, as these young people are facing the same hardships as other young people their age (economic crisis, unemployment, unstable jobs), as well as being hampered by their difficult life history.

Approximately 2% of young people under 18 are cared for under the child protection scheme, the majority being teenagers for whom educational and vocational guidance is crucial. Forced to quickly become autonomous and lacking in resources, a lot of them drop out of school very early or favour short-term vocational courses.

As pointed out previously, there are a variety of child protection services and care facilities for these young people in terms of placement conditions, target audience, problems dealt with and resources. Therefore the issue of vocational integration is addressed differently depending on the institution: some may benefit from an expert in charge of integration or education, while others may rely solely on the involvement of youth workers in this domain, and others yet may develop partnerships with specialised organisations to delegate this task. The vocational integration of young people is therefore left to the discretion of the departments and establishments, according to their resources and skills.

The institutions are slowly embracing the theme of the autonomy of young people cared for under the child protection scheme, as illustrated in 2011, when the FNFPE financed 48 projects based on the "management of specific target audiences to provide adapted care to children and teenagers faced with multiple hardships and reinforce the autonomy of the young people leaving the child protection scheme". However, the decline in funding has made it impossible to renew this call for projects. In addition, the territorial approach is gaining momentum when it comes to supporting this specific youth category, due to the decentralisation of child protection services and a lack of feedback.

Public employment services are also struggling to monitor the increasing number of young people. Although multiple associations have emerged to support the local agencies, the coordination and links between all parties concerned are clearly insufficient.

PART 2: YOUTH WORKER EXCHANGE – FEEDBACK AND ANALYSIS

5 CHAPTER 1 : FEEDBACK ON THE STAY

5.1 The structure in which the exchange took place¹⁶

The structure in which the exchange took place is the Residence Robert Vironneau. It is a Children's Social Care Institution (MECS- Maison d'Enfants à Caractère Social), that is part of the JCLT association, that is itself integrated into the SOS Group. The Residence R. Vironneau offers 20 childcare places in educational boarding for teenager(s) with ages ranging from 10 to 18 years and 8 places for "young adults" integrated into the "Young Adults Department", shared departmental community service.

It has as a mission to protect physically and mentally young adults in dangerous situation or at risk of being in one, as well as a mission to support them with their education and socialisation.

› The support goals are:

- To suggest an individualised support program adjusted to the young adult within a collective and/or individual framework.
- To support the young adult towards his progressive autonomy and his registration as a citizen.
- To make the young adult part of social and professional success dynamics.
- To promote parents' participation to the takeover.

5.2 Brief description of the field work

The exchange took place in the period starting on the 11th of January until the 15th of January 2016.

Three professionals in the structure got together :

- Interview of a Specialised School Educator, Residence Robert Vironneau, place: Residence Robert Vironneau
- Interview of two educators of the Young Adults Department, place: residence Robert Vironneau

Seven young persons were met. Six interviews were held in the residence premises, out of which one in the personal room of the young person. The last interview was conducted through video conference.

¹⁶ "Residence Robert Vironneau" http://www.groupe-sos.org/structures/69/R_sidence_Robert_Vironneau (page consulted on the 29th of February 2016)

The seven young persons (three girls and four boys) are between 15 and 20 years old. Four of them are young immigrants from Africa, and two of them have a path as foreign unaccompanied minor. The path of young adults within the Child Welfare Services (ASE - Aide Sociale à l'Enfance) and social-professional integration services is extremely complicated by the acquisition of documents allowing the young people to stay on the territory and "collect the aid and the subsidies necessary for their daily living".

- **The reasons behind the intervention of ASE in the case of encountered young adults :**
 - 1 was in foster family but has broken up with it
 - 2 were raised by their mother (application for refugee status without any means of subsistence)
 - 2 MENA young adults placed in a hotel unaccompanied and guided further on towards ASE
 - 1 young adult with a long path (since 9 years old) in ASE services due to a severe form of abuse.
 - 1 young adult separated from home due to his mother's mental disease since he was 11 years old.

- **The week also allowed for the participation in three team meetings :**
 - Team meeting, résidence Robert Vironneau à Poissy
 - Team meeting ados-passerelle, résidence Robert Vironneau à Poissy
 - Team meeting service jeunes majeurs, lieu : Résidence Robert Vironneau à Poissy

An interview was also led with Mrs Ortega, department head of Résidence Robert Vironneau.

5.3 The meetings organised with the social workers and the young adults

With respect to the observation of the group, I was able¹⁷ to be twice in the department "Teeners" of Vironneau in the evenings and take part in the evening meals.

On Tuesday the 12th of January, I was introduced to everybody as an agent working for the protection of youth in Belgium. Initially, the young people did not show any interest in my presence there, I was touched by their respect and their "indifference".

The young people were very different from the people I encountered within the services I work with in Belgium.

¹⁷ In this report, "I" refers to the observations made by Fabienne Fauvaux, "we" refers to a cross analysis between the observations and the analysis made by Fabienne Fauvaux and the recapture of them by Isabelle Lacourt.

Coming from a rural area in the south of Belgium, we have very few young people with an immigrant background and we are not responsible for isolated foreign Minors. The young adults encountered in the service of Vironneau were, most of them, in their late teens, of African origin, that in their relationship approach focussed more on adult relationship codes than teenager ones. Shaking hands with educators to say hello, the relational distance, the “high” positioning of educators, all these facts were a cultural chock for me.

The service is located on the floor of a 6-floor building tower, integrated into a complex of more or less 8 towers. The complex is wooded and well maintained. This place is demarcated by a barrier and offers a feeling of sufficient safety. On the same floor, there are the two teen apartments and the two pre-teen apartments. So that during more “off-peak” periods, young adults belonging to the Pre-teen group can integrate the “old” group. If the professional neutrality did seem somewhat normal for me with respect to the older teens adopting an attitude already a little adult, being concerned with internships, trainings, that would come home late due to their activities, the same position with respect to an 11-year old young teenager that had just integrated the pre-teen group got to me.

During the meal, what really mattered was the food, nobody had to waste anything, everyone had their own portion, the interactions were very impersonal, the educators throwing the ball sometimes in order to create a place of open communication, however few returns were spontaneous. The personal worries are not discussed, everyone keeps to their own secret garden and is in charge of their own path. No matter the path, the questions concern school, internships, administrative “duties”. The young people are clearly and primarily put around the table to be allowed to become members of the society and consequently adhere to a training journey. The rest: buddies, going out, hobbies, moods... do not seem to have the right to exist in their society, at least as long as adults are around.

At the end of the meal, the integration into the group took place more smoothly when I took part in community tasks (doing the dishes).

During the second meal, the atmosphere was more relaxed, the young people then began to see me as a “possible” discussion partner, more friendly interactions took place and questions regarding “customs and traditions” in Belgium were asked. –“in your area, there are only white people...!” The interactions highlighted everybody’s representations, as well as the representations that I imagine that the other create for themselves with respect to me. The difference between “them” and the educators was already well established; the difference between “me” and “them” was even more than that. From their more adult and very distant position, they were able then to distance themselves and enter a relational register that was more accessible to me, they were able to put their mask a little aside and I came to think of them as being more authentic. Then in front of me appeared teenagers that told jokes, made no hesitations, in a comfortable manner while trying to achieve in an impeccable manner also tried some small tricks.

In this manner, they were able to highlight an entire non-verbal language: small noises made with the mouth and discretely integrated into the discourse but that change its meaning. These messages are understood by some young people; and allow them to exist as “rebellious” teenagers, it is about resurgences of their original identity cultures and of their belonging to the group made up of peers in opposition to the “adult” group that may only express itself via codes that are inaccessible to others: us and the social actors. The question then arises: if these young adults can express themselves in a completely authentic manner, within this structure, only what they are through “hidden messages”, may we really speak of an inclusion process? Or are we just faced with a superficial imposition of values that do not belong to them?

It is through these individual interviews conducted with them that they were really able to highlight the importance of the support lived within the accommodation services as well as their paths.

› **The individual interviews conducted with young people :**

In general, the young people state that they are lucky to have been taken care of by the socio-educative services. They state that without this support, it is most unlikely they could attend school. The taking over by the ASE services represents a very important issue for five of the young adults encountered to the extent that this taking over represents their only means of subsistence and that it allows for decent living conditions especially for some isolated minors.

As far as this support is concerned, every young person knows that it is necessary for them to “stay low” and to show their motivation and good will to the adults (social workers) with a view to continuing to live in ASE conditions (meals three times per day, social and educational support for the overall administrative procedures, single room with respect for intimacy, safety, hobbies...). These elements are not acquired but deserved. This puts the interviews in a different light and raises the question “where there are the young people that did not have the force to hold on?”.

In a cross manner, the socio-professional integration of the young adults accommodated in these services was carried out at the beginning of internships, of direct contacts with the work world and the fact that these young people may “prove” their value, that they may provide the others with it although they were often in the situation of support beneficiaries. For most of them, they aim to obtain a vocational qualification CAP or BAC pro, which ensures their access to manual sectors. Moreover, the young foreigners have to adopt the language, go through the Centres for Information and Guidance that allow the access to training sectors and discovery internships. They have to prove that they are worthy of the support and of the State accommodation.

One single young adult among the 7 young people, due to his adopted behaviour, was guided again towards his family of origin and was therefore unable to “take advantage” of the support intended for young adults. He is now 18 years old and still lives at his mother’s home living on paid internships.

➤ **Reflection on the integration of young people after the interviews and observations conducted with the young people.**

Within the inspected structure, it seems that the young person is only considered in his status of future social-economical actor. The reality of the path embraced by the young adults hosted is such that everything has to take place on an accelerated basis, the development of identity and basic safety have to give priority to insertion as, in absence of a concrete link with the training and employment world, the young persons have still even more difficulties in being recognised as individuals and are therefore likely to find themselves at the periphery of the very important society.

The very circumscribed issue of the support of these young people in terms of social-professional insertion was first of all perceived as violent as I did not manage to perceive yet the issues of the integration of these young people within internships or certification paths. Over the meetings with the young adults, I realized that violence did not come from actors but from the social system in which every individual has to integrate in order to be included in the society and be recognised as individual. The fact of placing them in a situation of actor and of person responsible for his/her own life path is obviously violence when childhood did not spare the person, but is an act of relational courage.

The young people that I was able to observe possess the necessary resources to separate this, although as they have extremely painful life paths, they demonstrate relational intelligence and a sufficiently remarkable pugnacity. I am wondering about the homogeneity of the teen group and the profiles encountered in the youth care in Belgium, that do not highlight such integration skills. This question may obviously find a response via the admission process of young people within the accommodation services for young people in France and those in Belgium. In fact, we do not have admission requirements highlighting the commitment to a training or certifying path as up to now the services that I was able to encounter would put these elements as a condition for the admission (as well as the absence of offense, addiction, violence or psychological disorder issues). Even if we take into account two populations touched by the protection of youth and by the accommodation outside their home, we are not however with the same “young people”. Therefore, I ask myself the question regarding what happens to the young people that are not considered to be “suitable for ASE supports or that turn down the obligations towards it”? What if they face a path error: offense, act of rebellion, early pregnancy, need for paediatric psychiatry care, conflict of loyalty towards their family of origin?

5.4 The meetings with external partners with respect to the professional integration.

Here are the interviews led with the external partners :

- Interview of a social worker, Conseil Départemental Yvelinois, place : 48 rue d'auffreville a mantes la ville
- Meeting with the leader of Départementale Pôle Hébergement JCLT Yvelines (Mme Guillou) and Department head (Mme Desvigne, Mme Bechu) place : Direction Départementale Pôle Hébergement JCLT Yvelines, 117 Boulevard du Maréchal Juin, 78200 Mantes la Jolie
- Interview of the leader of Centre d'Information et d'Orientation de Poissy, place : CIO à Saint Germain en Laye
- Interview of a youth worker Résidence Jeunes Pousses
- Interview of a social worker Mission Locale du Mantois. Place : Mission Locale du Mantois, Allée des Médecins, 78200 Mantes-la-Jolie
- Interview of a social worker Foyer Jeunes Travailleurs Mantes, place : FJT de Mantes la Jolie
- Interview of « Educational Main councillor » of Lycée Adrienne Bolland à Poissy, place : Lycée A.Bolland
- Interview of a leader of « Restos du Cœur » of Mantes la Jolie place : 254 boulevard du Maréchal Juin in Mantes la Jolie
- Interview of a leader of a restaurant: la kaz d'épices. Lieu : restaurant

Contents of these interviews with the partners are “distilled” throughout the continued parts of this report.

5.5 Conclusion and code of practice

The protection of childhood is presented in a patchwork form where everyone has their own particularities. The different elements are but very little connected. The field of handicap, childhood and mental health are very rarely cross, whereas we are led to ascertain that the young people in need of protection find themselves very often at the crossroads of sectors.

However, one of the elements that, according to us, would allow the young adult to professionally integrate, but that was not approached during the different meetings is the fact of being cared by a structure reflecting various aspects of the support for youth: in the family, within the placement in a family, in pre-autonomy, in autonomy and within the support for young majors. This panel of services makes it possible to keep a guiding line for the young adult, but also to confront different skills among the various services at internal level.

Conversely, the fragmentation of the taking over and the lack of knowledge with respect to the network may entail difficulties in the provided support. The most profitable professional relationships are those that rely on a name, of course, but as well on a face and on interactions. The persons that the field actors make reference to as being important persons in terms of professional integration of the young adults are persons identified by them due to contacts. They established professional trust links and were able to “contaminate” the young adult who, in his turn, was more inclined to hear and rely on the statements made by the persons. (for instance: -“we are going to see Mister X, you shall see, he is a nice person, if you do your best, you may trust him and at the most minor issue, we shall talk about it all the three of us, I don’t send you to anybody, it is somebody I know...!”)

The elements that encourage the integration of the young adult may be “organised”, but it is mainly about small things that only seem to be unimportant in the very beginning. For instance, a special intervention that is in tune with the life experiences lived by the young adult, a look at him means that he does matter...

The young people met have, for some of them, dehumanised paths and maybe faced with this violence, we must, for our own protection, hide behind the shield of our professionalism. However, the persons popular among young people, those who made sense in their choices, those people that they can name, visualise, are not just professionals, they are first of all and above all meetings touched by humanity allowing the connection.

The social-professional integration starts with the individual’s reflection through the look of others. To exist for others, to be worth something, these are elements that each young adult was able to convey as a sine qua non condition for the integration success. “The educators keep telling me that they are proud of me and I tell them that this is thanks to them and just a little to me” tells me this big “adulescent” with smiling eyes.

6 CHAPTER 2 : THE PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

At the level of the inspected structure, the two main elements that are implemented within the professional integration of young people are the presence of a school resource educator and the monitoring of young adults (as per part 1 of the report).

With respect to the social workers of the structure and in connection with the professional integration, these may be perceived as “tutors”, they provide young people with assistance and support them in the administrative procedures. It is important to underline this as the young people mentioned to us during the interviews that to have a reference person, that is constant and upon whom they may count on is something positive.

› The organisation partners

- **As far as the CIO (Centre d'Information et d'Orientation – Centre for Information and Guidance) is concerned:** advisors have permanent jobs in school institutions and go back and forth between various school institutions. There is also a large room to accommodate young people that is provided with an Internet connection. The CIO has furthermore information, guidance, as well as support missions for school dropouts.
- **As far as the local mission is concerned:** advisors conduct interviews and coaching with the young adults starting from the age of 16 years old up to 25 years old included. These interviews aim to find again a valid guidance for young people that drop out of school and/or quit their job. They work in partnership with various training centres. They only work upon the young adult's request.

If the young adult loses this re-integration path, their mission is not to involve them again. We find that often, when the young adults drop out of school, this is due to the fact that they were “piloted” by other persons, and that this is not their own project or that there are still issues regarding personality or issues regarding addiction. The local mission also benefits from “technical platforms”, experimental areas with professionals in cooperation with the CIO (Centre d'Information et d'Orientation - Centre for Information and Guidance).

In case of dropping out of school, the young adult may come, provided that a sheet has been drafted by the CIO so that the school dropout can be recorded.

- **As far as the “restos du cœur” (free meals) are concerned:** some young adults are guided towards them by ASE in order to carry out general interest works with the aim of telling himself that “when one cares for others, he places a higher value on himself”. This association also organises activities such as cultural events and holidays for your people.
- **With respect to dropping out of High School:** This High School was visited as young people from Vironneau institution went through this school institution. The actor brings a polyvalent aid that may consist of a pedagogical aid, of programs focussed on the monitoring of the high school students and absenteeism situations.

A quarter of the high school students are faced with difficulties in terms of dropping out of school and especially those students coming from the MECS. There are steps to fight against dropping out of school: from 16 years old, one re-questions the young person’s path in terms of dropping out. It is about support work that is relatively “forced”¹⁸. Furthermore, when there is a problem within the school institution, the young persons may take an immersion internship in another institution to allow them to “turn elsewhere if it suits him better”. And if the young person says that “school is not made for me”, they either guide him towards the local mission, or the civic service.

¹⁸ If we compare this monitoring with the support suggested in Belgium by the Centres Psycho-Médico-Sociaux (Psycho-Medical-social Centres) (PMS).

7 CHAPTER 3 : THE ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

7.1 Description of the needs of support for the young people with respect to their professional integration.

- › For some young people, the fact that the educators allowed the contact with the family of origin is very important. Therefore, it would mean reflecting about the support one can provide parents with.
- › The young people welcome the presence of a school resource person, within the accommodation services, that is very familiar with the network and constitutes therefore a valuable aid.
- › The activities that allow “take one’s mind off things” (sport, hobbies...) allow a person to escape, to have a good time, as well as to discover passions that are subsequently promising.
- › The young people also highlight the importance of the connections they have with their peers and the love bonds. What they create at the emotional level has to be taken into account as an aid.
- › It would also be about respecting the connections between siblings. The elder siblings feel responsible for their younger brothers and sisters, and to have them “within sight” brings them a plus for serenity.
- › The young people would also wish to keep the same professionals around them, which would allow them to be able to settle down without a constant obligation to readjust themselves.
- › The young people also place an emphasis on a reference person within the professional environment. Sometimes, beyond the activity, it is the person with whom the profession is exercised, that is crucial for the young person’s career.

7.2 Description of the social workers' needs with respect to their skills and tools in order to support the professional integration of young people.

Here are the needs that we can identify after the analysis of the meetings and interviews conducted with the young people, the social workers and the partners:

- › Be able to manage the immediacy. The young people ask for immediate solutions. Therefore, the social workers are frequently faced with the frustration of the young people when they are unable to provide them with these immediate solutions they expected. The social workers are therefore obliged to learn to restore stages in the support process towards the integration and to (re)work the temporality with the young people. In a more concrete manner, it is about getting the young person to temper and visualise the various stages. This means that the professional has to be very precise about the manner in which he shall reintroduce stages and time in the aid relationship.
- › But this need to restore temporality is in tension with another dimension of the support given to the young people on their way to professional integration: one must be able to “catch a flying young adult”, be aware of his wish and use his wish. But, at the same time, the social worker has to dispose of a sufficient number of relation-building tools to allow him to say “I hear your wish, I keep it in mind, but this is not intended to be imminent”. In connection with this, we may mention another finding: the fact that there are some young people who do not have “the reality awareness”: they wish to live all by themselves, they wish to have autonomy, but they find it difficult to visualise what this involves in a concrete manner at the level of responsibilities.
- › The two first aspects are related to a more general need that is put forward by a large number of encountered social workers: the need for time.
- › To accept that the young person may be a failure. Sometimes, the realization for the young people only takes place after several failed attempts. The social worker needs to be “tenacious” when it comes to the monitoring of the young person. He also has to work on visualising the failure in the speech he delivers to the young person: “it does happen to fall on the ground”. One may take a risk in drawing up a comparison with a support in front of addictions: there is a need for predicting the “relapse”.
- › As for the issues in terms of dropping out of school. The social workers mention the fact that it is difficult for someone to be “up-to-date”. They are often under the impression that, even when projects regarding the fight against dropping out of school are decided upon, as soon as the implementation takes place, the problematic changed. One may say in a manner of speaking that “the young people go faster than the projects that are implemented”. There would be a need for a further prevention regarding the dropping out.

- › The social workers also put an emphasis on the importance of the places of consultation and exchange for the professional practices that would allow increasing links between partners. For professionals, these links would also mean “not to comply with protocols that label them” because due to the fact that one wishes to rationalise everything, one labels the different actors and, consequently, the young people, but people are not made to be labelled. Following the same order of ideas as the previous paragraph, one discovers again that it is important for schools to open up to the family and to the world of work.
- › More specifically, a better communication among the bodies that open up to the guidance and the information of the young people (CIO for instance or the dropping out of school steps) and the accommodation places intended for young people may be interesting. It is important for the young person to be able to question his choices and not to be *in fine* guided towards a professional branch, lacking exploration. For instance, the trust link with the school resource educator and the fact that the latter “knows” the young person matters for his future professional integration.
- › This aspect allows us to go into the fact that sometimes, the young people go through very complex situations and that it has an impact on their availabilities for the learning process. Therefore, if the “guidance order” is made at the “off-peak” moment, this is a harmful event. Once again, the presence of an educator that “guides the young person” may constitute here a solution. The maintenance of a stable link is therefore important.
- › We ascertain an increase in the requests for support for young people with a complex path and the support work has to enlarge. The multidisciplinary becomes cross-sectored. The educator profession is therefore called into question and requires arrangements such as for instance: the taking over of the family pole that was previously taken care of by the ASE delegates, trainings with respect to borderline personality disorders, the contribution of dynamics of the groups made up of young people...
- › Some partners of the child protection services speak about the need for simplified procedures. To have “less papers to fill in” would allow a better support especially for the creation of the link with the private partners.
- › However, there is a need for relays in the neighbourhoods to have access to young people, hence the importance of carrying out a fieldwork and of better mobilising the street educators.
- › The “self-esteem” is important to work on with the young people in terms of professional integration.

- › Some professionals ascertain a hiatus between the needs of the young people and the offer of services. For instance, a contact person spoke about the fact that, when the young people are sent in structures such as the local missions or the centres for information (CIO), they are sometimes left feeling very disappointed and consequently, instead of building a connection, this tends to deconstruct them. In turn, what really works is when the young person already targeted a project that is suitable for him and at that moment he really needs support and information in order to implement it, such as for instance: a young person that wishes to work leather inside cars and this is accessible as it is a way to implement training programs for these young people. However, if it is about a young person that does not have a job or training and that needs a long support work, it happens that the young person “may not bear it”.
- › However, this offer of service that may seem to be “staggered” may also be explained through the fact that there is a large number of young people who do “not know what they want”. As we have mentioned it above, if we wish these guidance and support devices for the integration to work “well”, the young people must already know what they feel like doing, which type of project they feel like approaching. In other works, there is a need for supporting the young people to take the time to know themselves.
- › One of the contact persons encountered mentioned the fact that it is important to work on the physical presentation of the young people during the job interviews. According to this person, in the social sector, we do not provide sufficiently the codes related to the world of work. Between the social workers and the young people, there is sometimes a certain isomorphism and the young people have a rare opportunity to find themselves in real job or work meeting situations or just notice these situations when they come up.

8 CHAPTER 4 : CONCLUSIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE

8.1 General conclusion regarding the interaction of social workers.

This interaction week was very enriching and allowed us to observe the elements that are different from the Belgian system in terms of youth protection. With respect to these differences, we wish, more specifically, to insist upon two elements.

First of all, upon the fact that the young people that were encountered in the structure make up a more homogenous audience and are more “equipped” than the young people supported by the Belgian structure Fabienne Fauveaux works for. A question arises with respect to this different audience: if we could observe the young people that wish to leave and who only have a minimum of baggage, “where is the rest”? This question received the necessary reply especially when we met the social actor within the “restos du cœur” (free meals). This actor is faced with young people that are in deep trouble, “that have nothing left” and of which some can be helped by the “restos du cœur” while others can’t. These young people are referred to by this actor as the “wild cats”. It is about young people who refuse to enter the file opening game and that no longer wish to ask for help to the extent that they get several benefits via the parallel economy. As regards this speech, one may ask himself whether it is not professionals themselves that blame the young people for their own incapacity to retain them by saying “you have made a choice, but this has nothing to do with me”. As these young people that find themselves in a situation of big exclusion and can no longer be retained, were however excluded through previous stages that meant for them “no, you go this way, no you go this way”.

Secondly on the education relationship that the social workers have with the young people they met. We noticed that relationships were more “distant”, less personalised than those that we have within the Belgian structure. As if the educators tried to make the young people face their responsibilities. If this distance may seem shocking in the beginning, it may be understood depending on the public action context with respect to France. The young people that get out of structures are not actually entitled to a minimum income and it is therefore essential that they return as soon as possible to the professional integration process.

8.2 Description of the identified good code of practice with respect to the manner in which the social workers help the young people achieve their professional integration.

- The “contrat jeune majeur” (protection during the integration test, that is the possibility to keep actual administrative and social support for young adults) because the young person often struggles with the handling of loneliness and with administrative steps he does not understand and as it seems that the administration actors do not always show empathy for young people and for the difficulties they are faced with.
- The position of “housekeeper”¹⁹ that could be noticed within the residence Vironneau. It is a lady that Fabienne Fauveaux met within the residence. She is not an educator, she “just” comes to help the young person take care of himself, but she finds herself in a position of humility and does not service the young person, she is “by the side” of the young person, she is there to support him.
- To put the young people in contact with organisations from the private sector (such as the restaurant that was visited on the occasion of the exchanges and within which some young people complete internships) so that they can see that there is the social sector code, but there are other codes as well.
- Similarly, the fact of being able to put the young people in contact with actors that do not belong to the social sector (other than educators, social workers...) such as actors that belong to the private sector, men and women from interviews, “housekeepers” allow some young people to feel inspiration. In other words, the social-professional integration may also take place beyond the professionalised social support by keeping obviously this professionalised support but not opening it to other “circles”.

¹⁹ In France, the housekeeper position is a specific position that requires training. She creates a new connection and allows the young person to come and deposit things in her vicinity. She may also be a mediator between the educators and the young people.

Abeona

AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE
TO CARE LEAVERS' PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION