

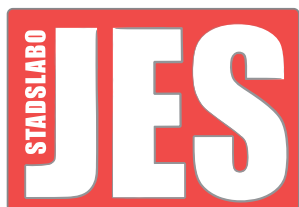


Youth Competence Centres in Antwerp

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Youth Competence Centres in Antwerp



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The Youth Competence Centres in Antwerp

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Introduction

The city of Antwerp has three Youth Competence Centres (YCCs). These YCCs work on the common ground between free time, work and competence development. The lifestyle and needs of young people are central in the activities of the YCCs. The intention is to recognize, acknowledge and further develop the competences of young people acquired in an informal way during their free time in order to improve their self-esteem and eventually also their educational and labour market position. In this process, the WAC (work-related acquired competences) and RAC (recognition of acquired competences) counsellors play a crucial role. The RAC counsellors create awareness on competences acquired through free time activities, whilst the WAC counsellors focus on the competences acquired in an informal way to improve the educational and labour market position of socially vulnerable young people.

This paper addresses the practice of WAC counselling. It will discuss the following issues:

- the geographic, demographic and socio-economic context in which the WAC counselling and YCCs are situated
- the rationale and the policy context from which the WAC counselling sprang
- the concrete implementation of the WAC counselling
- the main outcomes and results of the WAC counselling so far
- the most important lessons learnt during the start up and implementation of the WAC counselling

In order to produce this article, the following research methodology was applied:

- Bibliographical research on the demographic and socio-economic situation of the City of Antwerp;
- Statistical analysis of the demographic and socio-economic situation of the City of Antwerp, based on the data from the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB), The City of Antwerp and the Public Welfare Service (OCMW);
- Bibliographical research on policy measures of the City of Antwerp;
- Statistical Analysis based on the registration system for WAC counselling;
- Analysis of the annual report for WAC counselling and records of in depth interviews with the WAC counsellors and a roundtable on youth unemployment;
- In depth interviews with the coordinator of the WAC counsellors and the director of JES vzw;
- E-mail questioning of El Hassan Aouraghe, project leader activating labour market policy, WNE, City of Antwerp and Line Van Hemel, Coordinator Guidance, VDAB.

Antwerp: geographical, historical, socio-economic and policy context

The port of Antwerp: the heart of the economic development

Antwerp is located in Flanders, in the eponymous province of Antwerp. With 484 850 inhabitants and 204 51 km², it is the biggest city of Belgium in terms of population and the third biggest city in terms of surface. The city is situated near the Scheldt River (Stad Antwerpen, s.d.a). The city's prosperity has ebbed and flowed with the Scheldt, giving the city its international outlook. Today, as the most important European port and one of the most productive ports worldwide Antwerp rubs shoulders with the top ten global ports (Stad Antwerpen, s.d.b).

Consequently, the port constitutes an important engine for the local economy: the industry, the port and the distribution sector together account for 70% of Antwerp's economy (Stad Antwerpen, 2009a, p.2). These sectors also represent an important share in terms of added value: 36% of the added value is generated by the industry, 16% by the transport and storage sector (mainly linked to the port) and 14.4% by the wholesale and retail sector. These sectors also constitute the most important share of employment in Antwerp (Stad Antwerpen, 2010, pp. 37-41).

Antwerp facing metropolitan socio-economic trends and problems

Figure 1: Districts of the City of Antwerp



Antwerp is composed of nine districts: Antwerp, Berendrecht-Zandvliet-Lillo, Ekeren, Merksem, Deurne, Borgerhout, Berchem, Wilrijk and Hoboken (see Figure 1). Although all of these districts are characterised by typical metropolitan socio-economic trends and problems, the districts of Antwerp, Borgerhout and Deurne especially suffer from them.

Source: Stad Antwerpen, 2010, p. 4.

A growing, rejuvenating and diversifying population

Like in other big cities in Belgium, the Antwerp population is growing, rejuvenating and diversifying. The Antwerp population grew by 32 200 since 2000 (Stad Antwerpen, 2010, pp. 8-11). Compared to other big cities in Flanders, Antwerp has a very high population density with an average of 2.374 inhabitants / km² for the whole of Antwerp¹. The districts of Antwerp (36,8%), Deurne (15%) and Borgerhout (8,9%) house the largest share of inhabitants. Borgerhout is the most densely populated district, housing 11.064 inhabitants / km². Berchem and Deurne also have a high population density, respectively 7.303 and 5.576 inhabitants / km² (Stad Antwerpen, 2010, pp. 8-11). Although Antwerp, like the rest of Belgium and many other European countries, has an ageing population, the population pyramid shows a growing number of births, especially in the districts of Borgerhout, Antwerp, Hoboken and Deurne (see Table 1) (Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c).

Table 1: Population of Antwerp in 2010 by age and district

	% between 0 and 11 years old	% between 12 and 17 years old	% between 18 and 24 years old	% between 25 and 39 years old	% between 40 and 64 years old	% over 65 years old
Antwerpen	15,5	5,8	8,9	26,4	28,0	15,4
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	13,8	7,5	8,3	19,0	36,8	14,5
Ekeren	13,4	7,3	8,3	18,6	34,4	18,0
Merksem	12,8	6,4	8,5	18,5	33,3	20,5
Hoboken	15,0	7,2	8,3	19,0	32,8	17,6
Wilrijk	12,6	6,2	8,0	19,8	32,3	21,2
Berchem	12,9	5,4	7,3	22,1	30,5	21,7
Borgerhout	17,6	7,0	9,1	22,7	27,2	16,3
Deurne	14,1	5,9	7,8	20,2	31,1	20,9
Unknown	20,4	7,9	9,2	29,6	28,3	4,6
Total	14,6	6,2	8,4	22,5	30,2	18,0

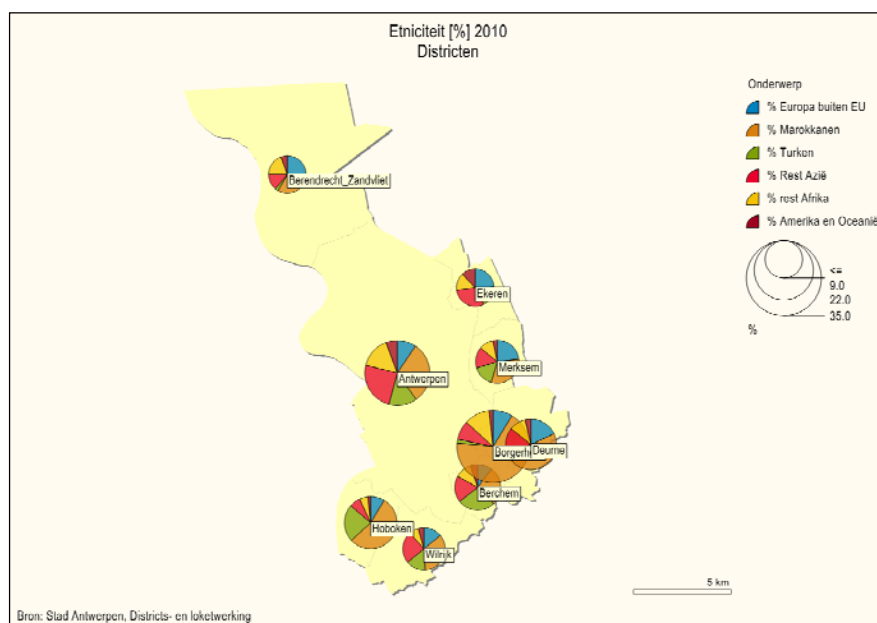
Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

In comparison to other big cities in Flanders, Antwerp has the biggest share of inhabitants with a foreign nationality: 15% while the average in Flanders is 6% (see Table 8 in annex) (Stad Antwerpen, 2010, p.13). This share rose by 4% since 2003 (JES vzw & het Brussels observatorium, 2009). This can be explained by a more important birth rate for inhabitants with a non EU nationality (see Table 25 in annex) and a positive migration balance of about 5,4% (Rotthiers e.a., 2010, p.26).

¹ Ghent and Leuven count for example respectively 1.519 and 1.637 inhabitants / km².

Taking into account not only people who currently have a foreign nationality, but also those who obtained Belgian nationality, but had a foreign nationality before, the share of inhabitants with foreign origins raises up to 30.7%. People with Moroccan roots represent the largest part of this group (7.8%). The districts of Borgerhout and Antwerp have the largest population with foreign origins, respectively 44.5% and 41.8% (see Table 9 and Table 10 in annex and Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Share of people with non-EU origins in the total population of Antwerp in 2010, by country of origin and district



Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

High levels of school delay and school dropout

For the whole of Antwerp, 28.1% of the pupils in primary school already are kept back one or more years compared to the regular school curriculum, because they didn't succeed in acquiring the necessary skills to go to the next grade. For the districts of Borgerhout and Antwerp, this share even rises up to respectively 35.4% and 32.8% (see Table 16 in annex, Table 2 and Figure 3 below).

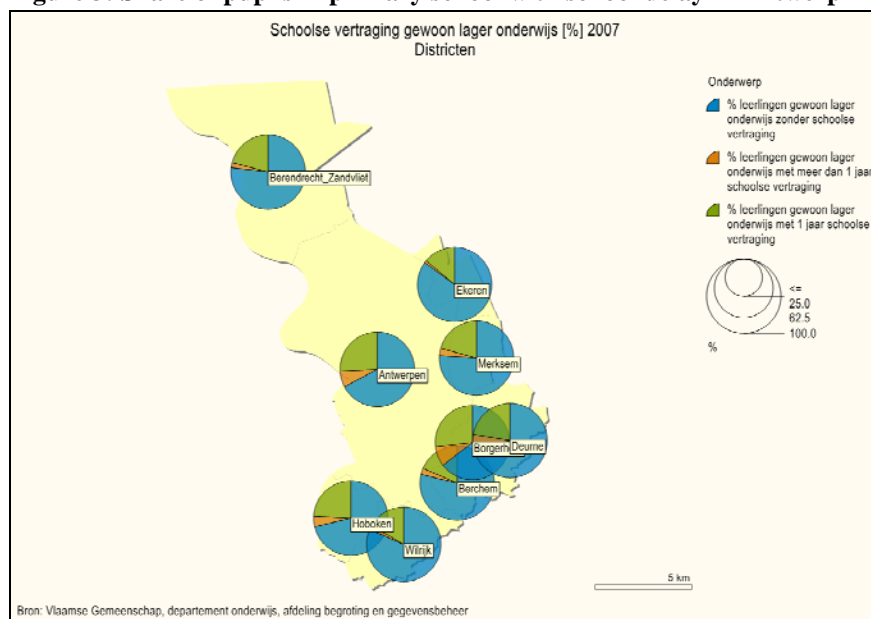
Table 2: Share of pupils in primary school with school delay in Antwerp in 2007, by district

	% of pupils in general primary schools without school delay	% of pupils in general primary schools with school delay	% of pupils in general primary schools with 1 year of school delay	% of pupils in general primary schools with more than 1 year of school delay
Antwerpen	67,2	32,8	25,9	6,9
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	76,9	23,1	20,9	2,2
Ekeren	85,1	14,9	13,9	1,0

Merksem	76,1	23,9	20,7	3,2
Hoboken	71,3	28,7	24,1	4,6
Wilrijk	81,4	18,6	16,8	1,8
Berchem	78,8	21,2	18,5	2,7
Borgerhout	64,6	35,4	26,9	8,5
Deurne	72,6	27,4	22,4	5,0
Unknown	71,1	28,9	25,4	3,6
Total	71,9	28,1	22,9	5,2

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Figure 3: Share of pupils in primary school with school delay in Antwerp in 2007, by district



Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

In secondary school, the share of pupils in Antwerp with one or more years of school delay attains 51.5%. The share of pupils with more than one year school delay rises up to almost 18%. The districts of Borgerhout and Antwerp again have higher shares of school delay than the average, respectively 62,3% and 56,9% (see Table 17 in annex, Table 3, and Figure 4 below) (Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c).

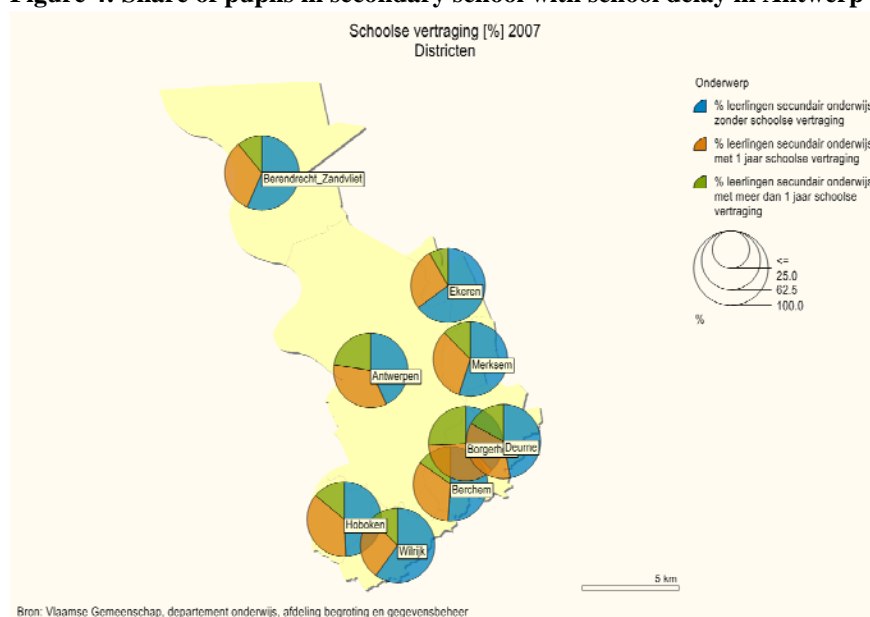
Table 3: Share of pupils in secondary school with school delay in Antwerp in 2007, by district

	% of pupils in secondary schools without school delay	% of pupils in secondary schools with school delay	% of pupils in secondary schools with 1 year of school delay	% of pupils in secondary schools with more than 1 year of school delay
Antwerpen	43,1	56,9	34,2	22,7
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	56,5	43,5	32,6	10,9
Ekeren	64,8	35,2	26,9	8,3

Merksem	55,0	45,0	32,6	12,4
Hoboken	49,3	50,7	36,7	14,0
Wilrijk	59,9	40,1	27,3	12,8
Berchem	51,1	48,9	33,7	15,2
Borgerhout	37,7	62,3	36,6	25,7
Deurne	47,0	53,0	36,1	16,9
Unknown	39,0	61,0	33,5	27,5
Total	48,5	51,5	33,7	17,8

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Figure 4: Share of pupils in secondary school with school delay in Antwerp in 2007, by district



Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

There are no specific data on school dropout in Antwerp, but in Flanders 10% of all youngsters between 18 and 24 years old did not get their secondary degree and are no longer attending school (JES vzw & het Brussels Observatorium, 2009). There are indications that this share would be even higher in the cities (Stad Antwerpen, LS, 2007, p.20). One of the consequences of school dropout is a higher risk of being unemployed (Stad Antwerpen, LS, 2007, p.20).

Research showed that pupils with Turkish and Moroccan origin from the second generation obtain lower success rates in school and are therefore more often kept back one or more years. They also tend to leave fulltime education one or two years earlier than their native counterparts. Pupils with Moroccan and Turkish origin therefore have much higher chances to leave school without secondary degree (Vandezande et al., 2008, p.24). These findings might explain the high school delay and dropout rates in Antwerp.

Differences in study choice for different ethnic groups

Research findings for Antwerp pointed to the fact that pupils with Moroccan or Turkish origin from the second generation are overrepresented in professional secondary education and underrepresented in general secondary education. This also strongly diminishes their chances to attend higher education (see Table 4 below) (Vandezande et al., 2008, pp.15-16).

Table 4: Share of pupils per type of secondary school in Antwerp by sex and origin

	Native pupils		Pupils with Turkish origin		Pupils with Moroccan origin		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	%
General Education	47,3	45,6	23,1	20,0	15,6	16,2	27,8
Technical/Artistic Education	31,1	32,7	30,6	24,2	43,5	27,5	31,5
Professional Education	20,9	15,6	45,0	52,1	40,8	56,3	38,7
Special Education	0,7	6,1	1,3	3,4	0,0	0,0	2,0

Source: Vandezande et al., 2008, p. 16

Male pupils with Turkish and Moroccan origin are overrepresented in ‘Mechanics’ and ‘Electricity’. Female pupils with Turkish origin choose more frequently than their native counterparts for ‘Body Care’. Both male and female pupils with Turkish and Moroccan origin are overrepresented in ‘Commerce and Office’ (see Table 26 in annex). Analyses from the Flemish Public Employment Service show that all of these studies lead to poor employment opportunities and high risks of unemployment afterwards (Vandezande et al., 2008, p.20).

High unemployment and poverty rates for youngsters and immigrants

Antwerp has a high unemployment rate² in 2010 14.6% compared to an average of 7.1% in Flanders (Stad Antwerpen, 2010, pp.26-28). The districts of Antwerp and Borgerhout have the highest unemployment rates. The unemployment rate in Antwerp is especially high for young people aged under 26: 28.6% against 20% for the whole of Flanders (July 2010) (see Table 5 below) (Stad Antwerpen, 2010, p.4).

Table 5: Number of unemployed in Antwerp in 2010, by age and district

	total number of inhabitants	total number of unemployed	number of unemployed aged between 18 and 24	number of unemployed aged between 25 and 39	number of unemployed aged between 40 and 54	number of unemployed aged between 55 and 64

² The unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the unemployed population between 18 and 64 years old by the sum of the unemployed and the employed population between 18 and 64 years old.

Antwerpen	178.596	15.407	2.613	6.875	4.584	1.178
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	9.714	391	87	101	138	54
Ekeren	22.688	708	159	241	204	98
Merksem	41.688	2.176	494	787	621	240
Hoboken	35.550	2.021	443	775	588	166
Wilrijk	39.005	1.767	337	715	521	176
Berchem	41.636	2.292	413	948	692	217
Borgerhout	43.148	3.692	816	1.572	997	247
Deurne	72.673	4.440	914	1.809	1.244	413
Unknown	152	x	x	x	x	x
Total	484.850	32.898	6.276	13.824	9.592	2.789

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

The risk of being unemployed is also twice as high for people with a foreign nationality from outside the EU as for people with Belgian nationality (see Table 6 below, Table 11, Table 12, Figure 6, Figure 7 and Figure 8 in annex).

Table 6: Number of unemployed in Antwerp in 2010, by nationality and district

	Total number of inhabitants	number of unemployed	number of unemployed Belgians	number of unemployed EU-citizens	number of unemployed non-EU citizens
Antwerpen	178.596	15.407	10.035	1.592	3.780
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	9.714	391	356	13	22
Ekeren	22.688	708	638	32	38
Merksem	41.688	2.176	1.702	165	309
Hoboken	35.550	2.021	1.562	135	324
Wilrijk	39.005	1.767	1.392	136	239
Berchem	41.636	2.292	1.730	181	381
Borgerhout	43.148	3.692	2.388	388	916
Deurne	72.673	4.440	3.273	374	793
Unknown	152	x	x	x	x
Total	484.850	32.898	23.078	3.017	6.803

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

The difficulties for immigrants on the labour market can to a large extent be explained by poor education. Immigrant jobseekers are more often low-skilled, especially jobseekers with Moroccan and Turkish roots. This phenomenon is more widespread in Antwerp than in other parts of Flanders (see Figure 8) (Stad Antwerpen, 2009, p.5).

The number of people living on welfare was also three times higher in Antwerp than the average in Flanders in 2007 (Stad Antwerpen, 2010, p.33). In 2009 1.8% of the Antwerp population was living on welfare. Young people aged under 25 are more likely to be on welfare (2.1%) and this risk is a lot higher for people with a non- EU nationality: 7.7%. The districts of Antwerp and Borgerhout house a higher share of people living on welfare than the average in Antwerp, respectively 3,0% and 2,2% (see Table 13 to Table 15 in annex) (Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c). These trends might be explained by the high level of unemployment. Young people and foreigners with insufficient periods of employment in Belgium don't get unemployment benefits and have to rely on welfare. Anyhow, no research results could be found to confirm these hypotheses.

Differences in employment sector for different ethnic groups

In 2001, important differences in employment sector were revealed. For men, the construction sector is the only sector that figures in the top 5 of employment sectors for all origin groups. For native Belgian and North & West European men, 'wholesale trade and commission' and 'the chemical sector' are relatively important. South European men have a significant share of men in 'wholesale and commission' but also 'hotels and restaurants' and 'temporary employment' score high. Moroccan, Turkish and Sub Saharan African men on the other hand, work to a large extent in 'hotels and restaurants', 'industrial cleaning', 'agriculture' and 'temporary employment'; in other words, in sectors with less job security and lower wages (Vertommen e.a., 2006, p.50) (see Table 19 to Table 24 in annex).

Native and North & West European women are strongly represented in 'public administration', 'education', 'health care' and 'trade' (wholesale and retail). Although 'public administration', 'health care' and 'retail trade' remain relatively important for South European, Moroccan, Turkish and Sub Saharan African women, precarious sectors as industrial cleaning, temporary employment and hotel and catering also penetrate their top5's (Vertommen e.a., 2006, p.51) (see Table 19 to Table 24 in annex).

More recent data weren't available, but although the sample was a lot smaller and the categories used to identify the sector differ, a study for the the second generation with Turkish and Moroccan origin in more or less confirms the same trends for 2007 (see Table 18 in annex).

Analysis of the main causes of school dropout and unemployment

An important share of the youngsters living in Antwerp doesn't get a qualification and has difficulties in finding sustainable employment, especially in certain districts. The causes for this are very diverse and link together in different ways. According to the 'Maatschappelijke Kwetsbaarheidstheorie' ('Theory of Societal Vulnerability' (Walgrave & Vettenburg, 1996)), the following factors play an important role:

1. The quality of the social network of the youth: in 2000 45,2% of the Belgian job vacancies were filled up through informal networks (Delmotte et al., 2001, p.80). A social

network that contains many employed people in different sectors therefore offers many job opportunities. It also provides a lot of information about successful study orientation and the variety of jobs available on the labour market. Anyhow, the social networks of the youngsters often don't offer these possibilities.

2. A realistic vision on their future: often youngsters have unrealistic expectations regarding salary, working hours and working conditions, due to ignorance. They often lack information about the variety of jobs available on the labour market (Baert, 2007, p.62). On the other hand, some youngsters suffer from low self-esteem and have very low expectations on their future perspectives (see below).
3. Wellbeing psychologically, physically, materially etc.: family, financial or psychological problems can be important barriers to succeed in education or on the labour market.
4. Knowledge of codes, institutions, rights and duties in society: youngsters sometimes get very negative experiences in school, employment services, etc, because they don't know the codes and communication styles of these institutions. These negative experiences lead to a profound distrust towards these institutions.
5. Accessibility of institutions, such as in the field of welfare, education, employment, free time, childcare, mobility: youngsters sometimes face financial, psychological or geographical barriers that prevent them from using the services of these institutions.
6. Preparedness of society (including local environment, politics, business) to invest in the target group
7. Cooperation and cohesion between institutions in different fields: sometimes there is a lack of cooperation and lack of an integrated approach between different institutions that offer services to these youngsters. This sometimes leads to confusion for youngster and sometimes even to contradictory advice and guidance (JES vzw, 2010, pp. 5-6).

Welfare, education and employment counselling is offered by diverse institutions, like the Study Choice counsellors (Studiewijzer), the Flemish Employment Service (VDAB), the Youth Advice Centres (JAC's), the Centres for Pupil Guidance (CLB), counselling from the trade unions, counselling organized by self-organizations, ...Nevertheless, some youth do not benefit from it due to psychological and physical obstacles both on the side of the young people and the service providers. An important factor explaining this phenomenon is the fact that youngsters tend to travel through relationships rather than through institutions³. Although some of these youngsters do participate in sport clubs, self-organizations or other specific services, this does not result in a transfer to the aforementioned specialized institutions. The associations indicate that they often lack the tools to link the youngsters to these institutions (JES vzw, 2010, pp.5-6). Some of the youngsters suffer from low self esteem and have very few aspirations concerning their future. This is often caused by difficulties in orientation in education. When youngsters choose professions which do not match their talents, interests and possibilities on the labour market, this often leads to disillusionment, school dropout and failure on the labour market (JES vzw, 2010, pp.5-6).

³ Quote of Tim Evans, director of Worth Unlimited on the My Generation meeting in Gothenburg in September 2009.

Finally recent research findings suggest that second generation youth from Turkish and Moroccan origin face important levels of discrimination while applying for jobs and on the work floor (Vandezande et al., 2008, pp. 64-68).

The findings of the ‘Theory of Societal Vulnerability’ and the TIES-research were confirmed during a round table⁴ organised with young people from the second and third generation with Moroccan origin. The youngsters stated as most important problems in orientation in education: 1) the difficulty to obtain information on studies in secondary school, in universities and high schools, due to a lack of role models and knowledge available in their proper social network, 2) the fact that teachers and Centres for Pupil Guidance (CLB) don’t give appropriate study advice to people with different ethnic origins, because they lack insight in the needs and possibilities of these youngsters 3) discrimination by teachers (Goele Geeraert, 2010, p.1).

Concerning employment, the youngsters mentioned discrimination by employers: employers often ask what origins they have and would rather fire ethnic minority employees than native employees. They also stressed the problems that Muslim girls with a headscarf face in finding a job. In some professions, for example teachers, a headscarf is forbidden (Goele Geeraert, 2010, p.1).

No data were available to confirm whether or not these difficulties also apply in the same way to first generation ethnic minority youth and if they face other barriers.

⁴ Roundtable on youth unemployment organized with 9 boys and 9 girls from Moroccan origin on 01/12/2010 in the framework of the European TIES-research (The Integration of the European Second Generation - www.tiesproject.eu).

A competence based approach to facing metropolitan challenges

As described above, Antwerp faces high levels of school dropout and youth unemployment. In 2010 7 million EUR were mobilized for preventive policies on school dropout. These policies concern:

- Strengthening school policies
- Support the development of high quality learning careers
- Improve transition between education and labor market
- Enhance pupils' participation
- Support the development of language policies
- Elaborate social educational policies
- Consultation and networking with the culture and sports sector
- Consultation and cooperation with higher education
- Link between the young and welfare services
- Elaboration of a supporting network for youth in risk
- Analysis of truancy figures and elaboration of policy advise
- Improve security in and around schools
- Observation of supra local policy developments & - funding (Stad Antwerpen, Algemeen Onderwijsbeleid, 2010, pp.1-2).

Apart from these preventive policies, the City of Antwerp also wanted to diminish the negative consequences of school dropout by reinforcing the recognition of informal learning. The idea was to strengthen the position of low-skilled youngsters and those who have left school early on the labor market by validating and recognizing the competences⁵ that they acquired through informal learning, especially in youth work settings. An important step was to raise awareness on the value of informal learning, both amongst employers and amongst youngsters. Youngsters also need to be able to discuss and proof these competences during a job interview. This means that youngsters need tools to name and 'measure' their competences and these tools need to be 'recognized' by employers and schools (Stad Antwerpen, LS, 2007, pp.19-20).

On the European level recent years have shown an important evolution concerning the recognition of informal and non-formal learning. On the one hand, in the educational field, the Copenhagen process⁶ (2002) put into place the European Qualifications Framework. The aim of this framework is to link and compare different training and education systems in Europe and promote mobility. The framework provides a structure for lifelong learning and opens up possibilities for the accreditation of prior learning (or informal learning) (APL). In the youth sector, on the other hand, several recommendations stress the importance of

⁵ Following the European Social Fund, we define competences as *'The real and individual capacity of individuals to use knowledge, skills and attitudes to act in their concrete, daily and changing work context and for personal and social activities. This concerns both life wide and work related competences.'*

⁶ For more information, see http://ec.europa.eu/education/vocational-education/doc1143_en.htm

informal and non-formal learning⁷ in youth work and the need for validation and accreditation of the competence development⁸. These evolutions provoked a big debate in the Flemish youth sector on whether or not youth work should invest in the validation and recognition of informal and non-formal learning. Some youth associations were concerned that the youth sector would lose its informal character or would become some sort of preliminary phase in the preparation of youngsters for the labour market. Another fear was that youngsters would engage in youth work only to embellish their CV instead of out of true commitment. In the field of education, preparatory work was done to implement the European Qualifications framework and translate it into the Vlaamse Kwalificatiestructuur (Flemish Qualifications Framework).

In 2004, while the youth sector was still debating a competence based approach in youth work on the Flemish level, Antwerp developed itself as a laboratory for innovative practices for the validation and recognition of informal and non-formal learning in youth work. Several youth work organisations developed their own experimental projects. The City of Antwerp adopted these projects and organised, on the initiative of the cabinet for youth and education, a steering committee where these organisations could meet, share experiences and initiate new policy developments. JES vzw, Formaats⁹, Steunpunt Jeugd¹⁰, the department of youth of the Flemish community, and the cabinet of youth and education of the City of Antwerp participated in this committee. Cooperation was organised between the sectors of education, youth work and employment both on the policy and on the organisational level. The further development of a competence based approach in youth work and the validation and recognition of informal and non-formal learning were also adopted as one of the prior objectives for the City of Antwerp (Stad Antwerpen, LS, 2007, p.19), which constituted an important leverage on policy level for future projects. The focus was on youngsters in general, but special attention was paid to low-skilled target groups. Theoretically they could benefit most from the recognition of informal learning, since they lack formal degrees. However, in practice we notice that this is not the case, since they are often not aware of the competences they developed through informal learning or aren't able to convince others about this. Highly educated young people on the other hand already manage to valorise their informal learning, without any special help or tools.

⁷ Informal learning is learning that takes place in settings that are not explicitly meant to be learning settings (like in a family, on the playground,...). Non-formal learning is learning that takes place in settings that are explicitly meant to be learning environments, but that aren't formal learning settings. For example a youth leader training course or a photography course that doesn't lead to a degree.

⁸ See for example *Pathways towards validation and recognition of education, training and learning in the youth field*, Working paper by the youth unit of the Directorate 'Youth, Civil Society, Communication' in the Directorate General of 'Education and Culture' of the European Commission and the Youth Department of the Directorate 'Youth and Sport' in the Directorate General 'Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport' of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg and Brussels, 2004.

⁹ Formaats is the federation of Flemish youth clubs and youth centres. See supra.

¹⁰ Steunpunt Jeugd supports all actors that are involved with children, youngsters and their organisations. Steunpunt Jeugd therefore gathers knowledge and experience and sets up networks to indicate and to strengthen the position of children, youngsters and youth work in society.

European funding created opportunities to set up several projects. Two projects, in particular, were carried out with ESF funding,¹¹ both of which responded to a call for the development of tools to measure and identify acquired competences and prior learning.

One of these projects was the WACKER project. WACKER stands for ‘Waarderen en Analyseren van Competenties en Keuzes maken op basis van zelfReflectie’: Valorising and Analysing Competences and Making Choices through Self-Reflection. It ran from April 2006 until September 2007 and brought together several Antwerp organisations from the educational, youth work and labour market reintegration sector. During the project these organisations discussed a common competence framework and created a model and concrete methods for competence identification and validation in these different contexts. The participating partners were:

- JES vzw: a non-profit organization that, as a metropolitan laboratory, continuously initiates new projects that aim at increasing opportunities for young people in the cities of Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent to benefit from creative and meaningful free time activities, employment and training, participation in society, and policy making. Its main activities include training for metropolitan youth work, labour market counselling, outreach work, organisation of adventurous city tours and activities and organisation of cultural projects.
- Formaat: the Flemish federation of youth clubs and youth centres that brings together 350 youth clubs and youth centres. Formaat wants to influence politics and the image of youth clubs and youth centres in society. Formaat also offers support, training and information for all youth club and youth centre participants. To realise this mission, it also sets up international projects, networks and cooperation.
- KIDS: a youth work organization in Antwerp that provides free time activities for children, teenagers and youngsters in several youth centres situated on diverse locations in the city. KIDS was recently renamed KRAS.
- Kavka: a youth centre for and by youngsters in the centre of Antwerp that wants to offer youngsters space and opportunities to express themselves creatively and to experiment. Kavka realises this mission by a programme of workshops, training and culture.
- Baobab vzw: a non-profit organization that manages the financial resources of the section for general educational policy of the City of Antwerp. Baobab vzw includes both the City Council and different school sectors. The Board decides in consensus on the allocation of resources for initiatives and projects that include the different school sectors. Baobab also employs some people that work for the section for general educational policy or the aforementioned projects.
- Levanto: a non-profit organization that wants to stimulate and enable people with lesser opportunities to get a grip on their career, housing and living situation. Levanto realizes this through community development projects, labour market counselling, training, work experience, social economy projects, career guidance, training and consulting for

¹¹ The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the EU's Structural Funds, set up to reduce differences in prosperity and living standards across EU Member States and regions, and therefore promoting economic and social cohesion. The ESF-agency in Flanders strengthens the realisation and innovation of the Flemish employment policies and the realisation of the Flemish reform programme to comply with the renewed Lisbon Strategy.

organisations employing these people and the creation of new and alternative ways of employment.

The second project was C-stick, an innovative digital portfolio developed by JES vzw in 2006-2007. The objective of this project was to develop a competence framework and tools for self, peer and expert key competency assessment. An important criterion for this framework was accessibility for a low-skilled target group, so very straightforward vocabulary was used and an attractive and easy-reference interface and simple navigation structure was designed. A second criterion was that it should be usable in different settings (leisure time activities, training, job counselling), regardless of professions or sectors. The project developed an innovative digital portfolio. The C-Stick is a central database (a USB flash drive) where young people can gather and store all kinds of relevant information; it provides them with a framework for personal development plans and it contains a tool to create adjusted CVs in a very quick and easy way. In the C-Stick the main focus is on the identification and development of key competences. It can be permanently updated and it is also a concrete and tangible tool young people can carry with them. The C-Stick portfolio on the USB flash drive is also connected to a server in order to keep a backup of the data, as well as being linked to an administrative system through which tutors can send files and competence assessments to their pupils.

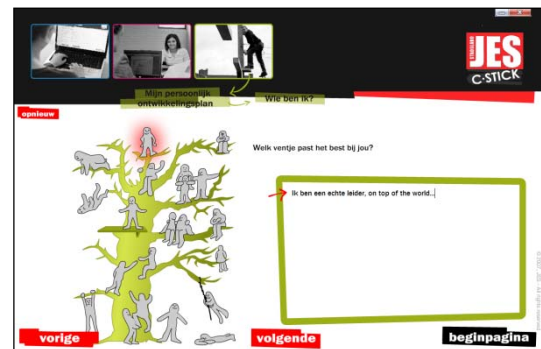
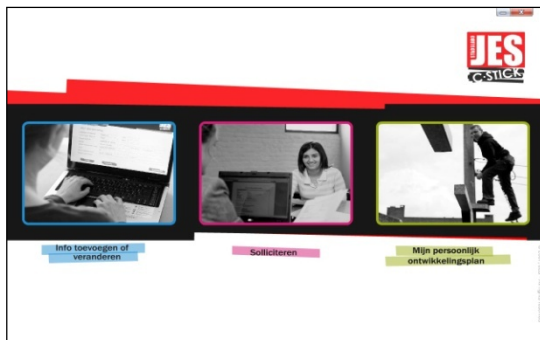
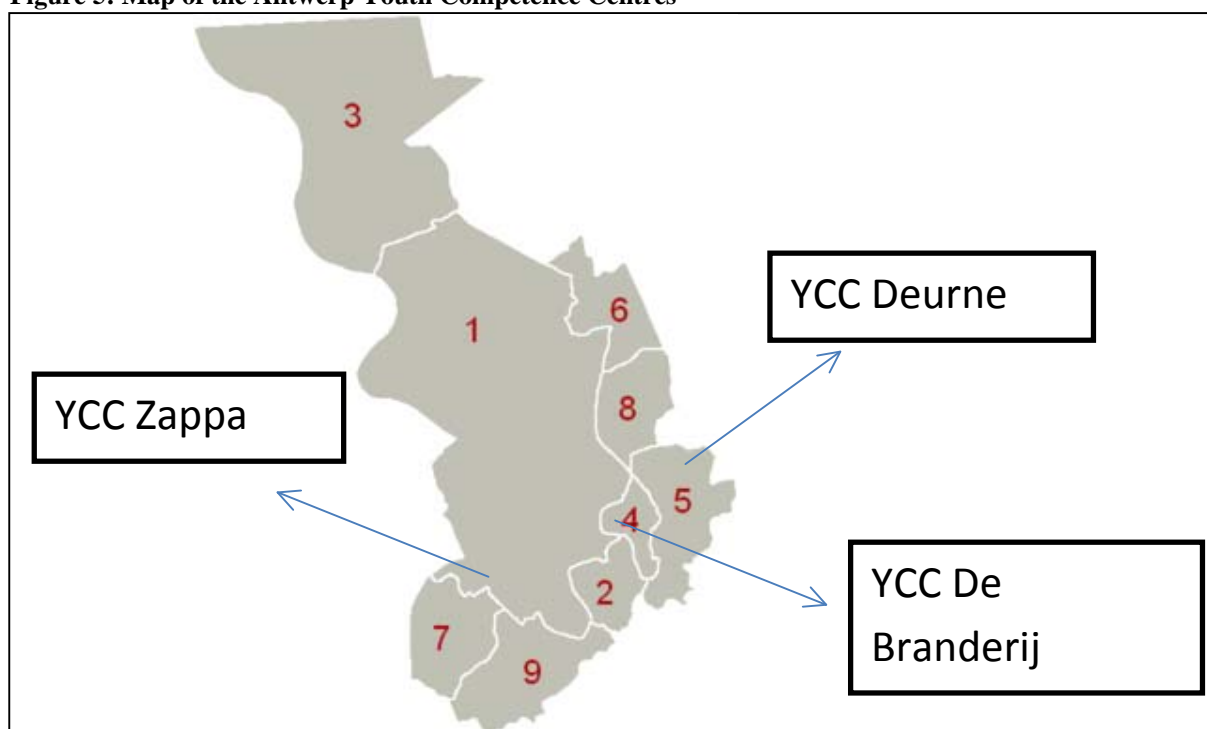


Figure 5: Map of the Antwerp Youth Competence Centres



The city of Antwerp has three Youth Competence Centres (YCCs). These YCCs work on the intersection between free time, work and competence development. They are accessible centres where youngsters, as human capital for the further development of the city of Antwerp, get maximum opportunities and customized counselling for their development towards adulthood.

The YCCs are open to all youngsters, but the priority target group of YCCs is 16 to 25 year old young people in a vulnerable socio-cultural or socio-economic situation. The lifestyle and needs of young people are the central focus in the activities of the centres. They are characterized by an integrated approach between the crucial fields in the development of young adults: free time, employment and education. Starting from this multidisciplinary setting, YCCs respond to the needs of the youngsters. A close cooperation was established with the counsellors from the Flemish Employment Service (VDAB) and the Study Choice counsellors (Studiewijzer).

Competences¹² are the core of YCCs: youngsters gain awareness on their competences (competence identification), further develop these competences (competence development) and get (formal) recognition of their competences (recognition, validation or accreditation of acquired competences or prior learning). The objective is to improve the youngster's self-

¹² Following the European Social Fund, we define competences as 'The real and individual capacity of individuals to use knowledge, skills and attitudes to act in their concrete, daily and changing work context and for personal and social activities. This concerns both life wide and work related competences.'

esteem, stimulate personal development and increase social orientation and participation. This also contributes to strengthening their labour market position. In this process, the WAC (work-related acquired competences) and RAC (recognized acquired competences) counsellors play a crucial role (see below).

YCC 21N

The ERDF¹³ provided funding for two youth competence centre projects. The first youth competence centre (YCC), YCC Kronenburg, was started in September 2005 and aimed at setting up a social economy project in Deurne-Noord – a neighbourhood in the district of Deurne characterised by high levels of inhabitants with foreign origin, school dropout and youth unemployment. The further development of the YCC started with an analysis of three neighbourhoods in Deurne with regard to unemployment, poverty, and the level of education. Starting from this analysis, the mission of the YCC was defined and an action plan was drawn up. In April 2009 the YCC was officially opened and in October 2010 received its official name, YCC 21N.

The aim of this centre was to combine youth work, a competence based approach and a labour market reintegration project. The first phase was the construction of a new infrastructure where youngsters could meet in their free time and participate in activities focusing on key competence development. YCC 21N was developed in cooperation between KIDS, JES vzw and Levanto. KIDS is responsible for the organization of free time activities and running the centre while JES vzw is responsible for the development of a competence based approach and the further development of the YCC. The labour market integration activities are developed in cooperation with VDAB (the Flemish Public Employment Service), Levanto and the WAC counsellor from JES vzw. For example, the 'Fietshaven' project, established by Levanto, consisted of a workplace for repairing and renting bicycles for students and employees from neighbouring companies. It allowed youngsters to get training and gain work experience with a focus on technical and labour market related competences (Provincie Antwerpen, 2006, pp. 122-123).

YCC Zappa

The second YCC was started up in 2006, also with ERDF funding, and was officially opened in April 2009 under the name YCC Zappa. A former school ballroom in Het Kiel (a neighbourhood in the district of Antwerp characterised by high levels of inhabitants with foreign origin, high level of school dropouts and youth unemployment), was renovated into a concert and event venue. During the renovation process youngsters were involved and had the opportunity to gain work experience, training and competence based counselling (Stad Antwerpen, 2006, pp.19-20). Kavka vzw manages the infrastructure and organizes free time

¹³ The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funds projects that reduce inequalities between regions, increase competitiveness, create employment and strengthen cohesion between the regions.

activities, while Werkhaven Antwerpen vzw¹⁴ has set up a service in the building where youth organisations can rent multimedia and other event materials. JES leads the WAC counselling element.

YCC De Branderij

In 2008 a third youth centre was recognized as a YCC by the City of Antwerp; YCC De Branderij in Borgerhout, run by JES vzw. Borgerhout, along with Deurne, is the most vulnerable neighbourhood, characterized by a large share of migrants, high unemployment and a low level of school completion. Unlike the two other youth centres, the De Branderij youth centre already existed. The activities of YCC De Branderij consist out of three main axes: maintaining and leasing its facilities to other youth work organizations in Antwerp; the organization of youth culture, city adventure and multimedia workshops and projects, and providing training for youth workers; the organization of free time activities for young people from the neighbourhood at the local level. The target group of these activities are children and youth aged between 6 and 25 years old. YCC De Branderij welcomes 30 000 visitors and participants annually and a team of about 20 young volunteers participate in the organization of activities .

The funding of YCCs takes places through different agreements between the City of Antwerp, JES vzw, KIDS (now called KRAS) and Kavka, which are renewed and renegotiated on a yearly basis. The Youth Department of the City of Antwerp provided most of the funding for the YCCs in 2010. On the one hand it provided the funding for the regular exploitation of the youth centers of De Branderij, Zappa and 21N (providing leisure time activities, management of the facilities etc.). For De Branderij this funding constituted 130 000 EUR in 2010. On the other hand the Youth Department also funded the three RAC counselors (40 000 EUR each in 2010) and granted 36 200 EUR to JES vzw for the further development of YCC 21N. Finally WNE¹⁵ granted 142.800 €to JES vzw for the three WAC counselors.

There is no cooperation between the YCCs and the private sector in order to find alternative funding sources.

¹⁴ Werkhaven Antwerpen vzw creates 1000 jobs in the social economy in Antwerp. Employees get training on the work floor, gain work experience and increase their chances to be employed by the city or regular employers.

¹⁵ Work and economy (WNE) is an agency of the City of Antwerp that aims at strengthening the economy and increasing employment. The objective is a flourishing city where economic return goes hand in hand with socially responsible entrepreneurship and opportunities for everyone. Together with other partners on the labour market, in education and training and in the different professional sectors, WNE strives for quality jobs that allow people to fully develop their talents. WNE gets a view on jobs and competences through research and analysis. In partnerships these analyses are turned into supported objectives and action plans. WNE also offers support during the execution of these action plans.

Analysis

The three YCCs developed differently; YCCs 21N and Zappa were funded by ERDF. Since ERDF is about economic and regional development, the objectives of these YCCs were mainly economic ones. The priority was to reinforce the labour market situation rather than to encourage personal development. The start-up of both YCCs was slowed down due to infrastructural problems and they are still establishing a programme and a relationship with the youngsters and the neighbourhood. Another factor slowing down the process is the fact that in both YCCs several partners work together. It took, and still takes, quite a lot of effort to establish good cooperation between the partners, both on the level of the youth workers and coordination. This is due to differences between reference frameworks, codes and organisational cultures which take time to get to know and respect.

For YCC Zappa, in particular, the challenges in establishing itself have been quite significant both because Kavka was still a very young and small organisation, and because several objectives had to be combined in one concept. YCC Zappa had to build a relationship with the local community, where a large share of the youngsters have foreign origins, and try to develop a programme that is relevant for the neighbourhood, while also holding a large number of events and parties. The youngsters attracted to the events are completely different from those living in the neighbourhood, and so these objectives are not easy to combine and require completely different competences from the youth workers. Werkhaven Antwerpen vzw also has the social economy project for youngsters in a vulnerable situation. This project consists out of a service where youth organisations can rent multimedia and other event materials.

YCC De Branderij is ahead of the other YCCs in so far as the youth centre already existed for several years so there were already activities taking place and the young people already knew the place and the youth workers. The integrated approach in YCC De Branderij grew in a more organic way, since the youth centre already offered free time activities and training for youth workers and youth leaders, as well as training on key competences and job counselling during the ANTWERK! Programme. All of these activities were organized by JES vzw. Some employees were employed both in formal training and in training for youth workers and youth leaders, so the link between free time activities and formal training and employment became more natural. The experience gained through other projects, such as the WACKER and C-Stick project, helped to quickly implement a competence based approach. As a result, De Branderij already was a YCC before even being recognized as such.

Due to these differences in development rates, a lot of effort was put into strengthening cooperation and sharing expertise between the YCCs. JES vzw plays an important role in the development of the centres by investing in developing expertise, vision and a pedagogy in the competence based approach. JES employs all three WAC counsellors and two of the RAC counsellors (the RAC counsellor of YCC Zappa is an employee of Kavka). To ensure expertise sharing, meetings with all RAC and WAC counsellors are organised on a regular basis.

Actually, there is no direct contact between the YCCs, the WAC counsellors and employers or other successful business people. Given time and budget restraints, such a network couldn't be established. However, this would be of great value and there are future plans to invest in this throughout our partnerships with VDAB, WNE, Levanto, Werkhaven Antwerpen vzw, etc (see above).

It is too early to assess the impact of the YCCs on the local community, since the YCCs are still in full conceptual and organisational development. Anyhow both local policy makers and the Flemish employment Service value the work of the YCCs:

“The City of Antwerp initiated the YCCs. On the one hand we were confronted with high unemployment and important school delay for certain categories of youngsters, especially youngsters with a vulnerable socio-economic position or ethnic minority origins. On the other hand official institutions face important difficulties in reaching these target groups and developing an effective approach to integrate these youngsters in education or in the labour market. Therefore we were looking for other, more accessible methods that better fit with the needs and lifestyles of these youngsters.

The YCCs obtain good results and therefore we want to continue this approach. This was one of the reasons to participate in the Urbact-project ‘My Generation’: through European exchange, the commitment of a steering committee and the participation of youngsters, we want to further develop the YCCs. At this moment we are elaborating a local action plan, coordinated by an external consultant.

We also want to give the youngsters the opportunity to have a dialogue with policy makers on themes as youth unemployment in the city and barriers that youngsters face in their search for work. Up to now two roundtables were already organised. The idea is to come to an approach in which youngsters and policy makers develop common projects that tackle barriers on the labour market” (Aouraghe, 08.12.2010, freely translated by Van de maele).

“The Flemish Employment Service (VDAB) appreciates the work of the YCCs and the WAC counselling. It's the first time that a youth organisation is active in the fields of free time, education and labour market in an integrated way. This is very innovative and can constitute an important value for public services and for policy makers.

It is very valuable that youngsters develop labour market competences during their free time and through volunteering. Although unemployed, this allows youngsters to have a meaningful engagement, which improves their competences and their self-esteem and diminishes the gap between youngsters and the labour market. Youngsters can also count on the YCCs for advice concerning employment.

VDAB is also enthusiastic about the fact that the YCCs focus on the prevention of wrong study choices and school dropout. Often policy measures focus on cure rather than on prevention.

The concrete cooperation with the WAC counsellors has to be defined more clearly, but there is a clear added value for the Flemish Employment Service (VDAB): we get another view on the youngsters. It's also a good thing that the WAC counsellors can help the

youngsters to manage their administration and to question their attitudes and expectations towards the labour market and the Flemish Employment Service (VDAB)” (Van Hemel, 08.12.2010, freely translated by Van de maele).

The YCCs have also attracted a lot of national and international interest. Apart from the participation in the My Generation project and URBact, many other national and international delegations came to visit the YCCs, we were often invited to present our results in national and international conferences and several high schools invited us for guest lectures or to participate in projects (see Table 27 in annex for a list of study visits and conferences). In 2010 we were also asked to share our experiences and give advice in several bodies:

- Culture Forum, Working group competence based approach: this forum was initiated by Joke Schauvliege, Flemish Minister for Culture in order to get input from the field to elaborate her policy action plan.
- Elaboration of the Flemish Policy Action Plan Youth -Working group on Employment and Working group on Education and training
- Network of expertise on RAC and APEL: initiated by the public administration, department Education and Training, department Work and department Culture, Youth and Sports in order to come to integrated policies on RAC and APEL. JES vzw participated in the working groups on transition from RAC to APEL (from identification of informal learning to accreditation) and inclusion of target groups and RAC.

WAC counselling: implementation and intervention

WAC (Work related acquired competences) counselling is embedded in YCCs and is crucial for their good functioning. In 2008 each centre received a RAC (Recognition of Acquired Competences) counsellor to develop and implement a competence based approach. Nevertheless, the work element of YCCs remained underdeveloped. In the meantime, ANTWERK!, a two year programme for tackling youth unemployment in Antwerp, was finished, and youth unemployment figures were rising again due to the financial crisis. Thus, since June 2009 each YCC also has a work related acquired competences counsellor (WAC). They are the 'stepping stones' between street and work: they meet youngsters in the streets and give them help regarding applying for a job or choice of study. They work in close cooperation with the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB) and the Antwerp Study Choice counsellors (Studiewijzer).

WAC counseling

Three WAC counsellors focus on the strategic development of the 'work' component, in close cooperation with their RAC colleagues. WAC counsellors head the employment element of YCCs and aim to improve the educational and labour market position of socially vulnerable young people: young people who finished their compulsory schooling with insufficient educational achievements or without formal qualifications. Their position on the labour market is extremely vulnerable. They have little self-esteem and do not have the necessary competences to find a sustainable job. Many of them do not manage to register as a job-seeker with the Flemish Public Employment Service, prepare a job application letter or a CV, present themselves to an employer or have a job interview.

The target groups for WAC counselling are:

- Early school leavers older than 16. An important share have problematic school careers. They are often tired of school, change frequently schools and programmes, and finally drop out.
- Disoriented youngsters still at school and older than 16. They follow a programme that does not match their interests or talents, or doesn't offer future perspectives.
- Unqualified, unemployed young people between the age of 18 and 25.
- Low-skilled school leavers aged between 18 and 25 years old. They have a degree but lack work experience and do not know how to apply for a job, which reduces their chances of finding employment.

Although WAC counselling is open to all youngsters, almost all members of the target group belong to ethnic minorities of the second and third generation; at this moment, all are boys and approximately 90% are of Moroccan origin. This certainly has to do with the location of the YCCs and with the profile of the WAC counsellors themselves, who are all male and of Moroccan origin.

WAC counsellors are the link between the street and the employment office, and a crucial confidential person for young people in the neighbourhood. They are not part of the formal, institutionalized training and counselling as organized by the Flemish Public Employment Service, and are not formal counsellors. However, they reinforce formal organizations by an informal approach and youth requiring formal training or job counselling are transferred to these institutions. Within this informal context, the WAC counsellors work on the competence awareness and development and career orientation of young people and actively refer those who require career guidance or vocational training to other partners. The core of the WAC counselling method is a competence based, outreach and empower approach which is aimed at improving self management in educational and in the labour market, both for individuals and groups of youngsters. Thus, the aim is to strengthen young people and increase their ability to self manage, rather than just getting them a job.

Four kinds of guidance are offered: 1) Clients are offered support in finding a job: guidance to the VDAB and registration, guidance to other socio-economic institutions, searching for appropriate job offers, writing a motivation letter and CV, support to make phone calls, do mailings or job interviews, introduction to C-Stick. The counsellors accompany youngsters but they have to act for themselves and decide what steps they want to take. 2) Orientation, counselling and informal training on key competences are offered. 3) The counsellors provide support in finding an appropriate school, including giving guidance to the school, accompanying the youth, talking to their parents etc. 4) Finally, advice is offered with regard to study choice, including giving information and guidance to the Antwerp Study Choice Counselling or other institutions. The WAC counsellors actively invest in partnerships with institutions in education, employment, housing and welfare, in order to be able to respond adequately to young people's needs. They are supported in this by the youth workers and RAC counsellors.

The WAC counselling is based on experiential learning. The following steps are part of the intensive counselling the WAC counsellors offer:

- Presence: the first step is to become acquainted with the neighborhood. Youngsters need to get to know the WAC counselor and understand what his role is. The WAC counselors are present in the youth hangout spots, make use of their proper social network and of existing networks of partner organizations in the neighborhood.
- Establishing relations: the second step is to establish relations with youngsters. WAC counselors are present in the youth hangout spots and try to participate in their conversations, play football with them, etc.
- Gain trust: once relationships are established, WAC counselors try to gain trust. This phase is really intensive, but it is crucial for the further guidance. It takes 6 to 8 months for youngsters that were unknown before and 1 to 2 months for youngsters that were already part of the social network.
- Create self-esteem: many youngsters suffer from low self-esteem and have a negative view on their future. WAC counselors try to stimulate awareness on competences and reinforce self-esteem.

- Orientation: once youngsters start believing in themselves and in their future again, often they want to find a job or go back to school as soon as possible, and quit their negative situation (drugs, hanging around, small offending,...). WAC counselors investigate with the youngsters what they want and what their possibilities are. Often youngsters lack insight in the different administrative steps they need to take. The WAC counselors inform them on this and create a realistic plan together with the youngsters. The youngsters themselves are responsible for carrying out this program.
- Stimulate learning: the WAC counselors stimulate as much as possible independency. They formulate realistic objectives for the youngsters and try to stimulate them to further develop their competences.
- Follow-up: once youngsters feel self-assured enough and are aware of their talents and competences, they are ready to work or to engage in training or education. Anyhow, a couple of negative experiences can lead to a quick fallback in the former negative spiral. The WAC counselors assure a good follow-up and try to help youngsters handle negative experiences and tackle problems.

An effective WAC counsellor must have good contact with the target group and know their interests, needs, culture and codes, as well as being familiar with the workings of existing, mainstream institutions. WAC counsellors received substantial training from the outset before getting to know the target group in different settings (such as in sport centres, streets, in bars), where they could make clear to the youngsters their role. All three counsellors working in the YCCs live in the neighbourhood in which they work and have Moroccan origins. None of them has a social worker degree, but all have experienced unemployment. One of the three counsellors was a former youth worker and worked for seven years at youth centre De Branderij. Thus, the WAC counsellors can easily relate to the young people in the neighbourhood and they can speak their language. Often, they are seen as a role model.

A phase-model for coaching and guidance is also in place, which will enable WAC counsellors to better situate their coaching and have a more structured approach. Nevertheless, the precise role, nature of responsibilities, and nature of the cooperation between the RAC and WAC counsellors and YCC youth workers need to be defined more clearly.

Outcomes and evaluation of WAC counselling

In 2010 the WAC counsellors had to establish a relationship with the youngsters in their respective neighbourhoods. The first step is to inform the youngsters about their job and to gain confidence. The WAC counsellors estimate that approximately 300 youngsters know about their job and know what they can expect from a WAC counsellor. In a second phase, youngsters ask for advice, start to tell about their aspirations or problems, ... This marks the beginning of more intensive coaching, following the phase model as described before.

The intensive coaching is monitored through a registration system. The WAC and RAC counsellors record on the one hand the different actions and contacts they have with youngsters in order to assure an accurate follow-up and have continuity in the guidance provided by the RAC and WAC counsellors. On the other hand, at the beginning of the coaching, a starting profile is made up for each youngster. This profile contains contact details, age, educational, employment, family and income status. A second profile contains the same information, but is regularly updated. On the basis of these profiles, the system automatically calculates the number of youngsters that are unemployed, work, etc. In this way a quick overview of the starting situation of the youngsters and their actual situation is generated and allows to continually monitor the effects of WAC counselling. Anyhow, the actual system doesn't allow to register intermediary situations. Youngsters that found a temporary job, but are unemployed again afterwards, are recorded as if they never worked. Another problem is the fact that the WAC counsellors do a lot of fieldwork and therefore have difficulties in assuring up to date registration.

The results of the WAC counselling differ from YCC to YCC (see Table 7 below). In YCC De Branderij, the WAC counsellor was a former youth worker there and thus he did not have to invest in creating trust since the youngsters already knew him. He also benefited from the fact that he already knew his colleagues, who all work for JES vzw, and worked in close cooperation with the RAC counsellor and the counsellor from VDAB. He could also count on good infrastructure and the availability of a computer room.

In YCC 21N, the WAC counsellor was present at the youth centre, participated in a football event, and met with the youth in their hangout spots.

For YCC Zappa getting into contact with the youngsters was more difficult as the youth centre is far from the neighbourhoods in which the youngsters live, and a relationship between the youth centre and the local community has not yet developed. The WAC counsellor was present on squares, in sport clubs and youth centres. He also participated in a pilot project in the district of Berchem that aimed at giving youngsters a more realistic¹⁶ and meaningful future perspective. In 2010 the WAC counsellor established cooperation with other organisations that are present in the neighbourhood, like KIDS (now called KRAS).

¹⁶ Some youngsters have very unrealistic expectations with regards to working hours, working conditions and salary or jobs that are accessible to them. A more realistic view on their possibilities leads to more effective job applications.

Table 7: Intensive coaching and results of the WAC counseling, December 2010

YCC	Total intensive coaching	Training and education				Work		
		Secondary school	High school	Training	Total	Temporary	Long-term	Total
YCC De Branderij	45*	7	–	13	20	19	8	27
YCC Zappa	42	2	7	1	10	11	3	14
YCC 21N	42	12	5	7	24	7	5	12
TOTAL (%)	129 (100)	21	12	21	54 (42)	37	16	53 (41)

*The total of youngsters that got intensive coaching is not equal to the total of youngsters that returned to training or education plus the total of youngsters that found work, because some youngsters followed a training in 2010 and found work in the same year.

Source: WAC counselor registration system, calculations by JES vzw (09/12/2010).

In total, 129 young people from ethnic minorities received intensive coaching in 2010, from which 53 found a job (41%), 21 (16%) started a training course and 33 (26%) returned to education. The most important employment sectors are logistics (employment in warehouses), industry (operator), and electricity. Other sectors were the social sector and cleaning services. The most popular training modules were forklift and training in VCA.¹⁷ Other trainings were plumber, truck driver, electrician, welder and refrigeration technician.

Given the fact that these youngsters were in a very vulnerable situation and some of them weren't even registered with the VDAB anymore, these figures are quite impressive. Anyhow, the number of temporary contracts is very high (70% of those who found work). On the one hand these temporary contracts allow young people to gain valuable work experience, but on the other hand they also stress the continuing vulnerable situation on the labour market of these youngsters. Successes are very fragile and the WAC counsellors notice that the youngsters really need continuing support. With regards to training, young people chose for sectors that suffer from scarcity of trained workforce and offer important employment opportunities.

Apart from the effects of the intensive coaching on the educational and labour market position of the youngsters, there has also been an increase of young people participating as volunteers in the youth centres. This shows their sense of involvement and creates a bigger sense of ownership. Volunteering gives the youth the opportunity to identify and develop competences, to feel that they are participating in something meaningful and also to gain a small volunteering salary. These youngsters also act as role models for the local community.

The impact of the added value of WAC counselling is apparent in several ways.

¹⁷ A certificate that proves certain competences regarding security procedures and that is often needed to work in logistics

- It recognizes and develops young people's competences in a group and/or individually in view of their search for an appropriate school, further training, or a job;
- It matches work-oriented and school-oriented competences of young people with their previously acquired competences in order to obtain better choices of school programmes and/or jobs;
- It encourages a connection between education and the labour market and gives young people a stepping stone to employment by means of preliminary programmes that focus on attitude training;
- It enhances the social participation of young people and provides a sense of empowerment;
- It narrows the gap between socially vulnerable young people and the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB);
- It gives young people the possibility to gain their first work experience through temporary employment, permanent employment or courses providing practical training.

Lessons learnt and transferability

One of the most important strengths of WAC counselling is the fact that it focuses on the two most important bottlenecks that youngsters face: education and employment. WAC counsellors gain a lot of respect from the youngsters if they can help them and this also leads to commitment for the neighbourhood, the city and the society as a whole. Youth work organisation therefore shouldn't fear to involve in educational and labour market counselling, as this may also lead to increased social participation.

The outreach approach of being present on squares, in sport centres, in the youth hangout spots, has been proven successful. Youngsters that weren't registered at VDAB were successfully reached and guided to VDAB and the Study Choice counsellors. The fact that more than 40% of the young people that got intensive coaching found a job in a relatively short period (see above) is evidence of the gap between these excluded ethnic minority youth and the institutions, and confirms that youngsters tend to travel through relationships rather than through formal, mainstream institutions.

Nevertheless, experience has shown that there are also difficulties linked to this approach. It takes a lot of time to find the right places to meet youngsters and to gain their trust and confidence. Outreach based counselling should therefore, preferably, be linked to existing networks and based in the areas where youngsters live and have their hangout spots. Another difficulty is that the youngsters are rarely present during office hours with many getting up at 3pm and stay up until 3am, making contact with counsellors more difficult. Counsellors should therefore be prepared to accept irregular working hours. Counsellors using an outreach approach are also confronted with peer pressure; many of the young people are afraid of losing face and this sometimes stops them from asking for help. On the other hand, if group leaders can be helped, they are often willing to contribute in a positive way to the coaching of other youngsters.

Another important difficulty that was faced during the project is the fact that it was carried out in several partnerships. It was a long process to establish good cooperation between the different partners both on the youth worker and the coordination level, as there are differences in reference framework, vision, codes and culture. It is absolutely crucial to get to know and respect each other's reference frameworks, agree on a common mission and to make clear arrangements on every actor's role and responsibilities. This is a process that takes a lot of time and also a lot of vision, open mindedness and courage from the participating partners. Additionally, in partnerships everyone is involved but no one has the ultimate responsibility, which can slow down the process and hinder decision making.

An inspiring example of how to tackle this issue, is the cooperation between the WAC counsellor and the VDAB. On the management level there was an agreement to let employees from the VDAB do a short apprenticeship in the YCC and for the WAC counsellors to do a similar apprenticeship in the Flemish Public Employment Service. This allows the WAC counsellors and the VDAB employees to get to know and better understand how the other

organisation functions, and to establish a more personal and professional relationship based on trust. This should also help in defining more clearly each other's role and responsibilities.

In 2010 the VDAB counsellors visited YCC Zappa and YCC De Branderij. The WAC counsellors will visit the several VDAB project in the beginning of 2011. In 2011 each WAC counsellor will have a meeting every six weeks with the VDAB counsellor to discuss on the situation and the approach for specific young people. To preserve the voluntary character of the WAC counselling, only those youngsters that give their permission for it will be discussed. Four or five times a year, there will also be an official meeting between all WAC and VDAB counsellors. On the management level there are also regular meetings. Finally the VDAB counsellors are also invited to informal moments in the YCCs like an open house event.

As discussed earlier, the job of a WAC counsellor is far from easy. The counsellors are required to combine street credibility with a thorough understanding of the labour market, the education system, and the relevant institutions operating in these fields. They are also confronted with complex networks and partnerships and deontological ethical questions. This demands a profile that does not fit with the common youth worker profile and, therefore, a lot of effort has to be put into counsellors' training and coaching.

The two main challenges for 2011 are the organisation of group based coaching and the broadening of WAC counselling to girls and other ethnic minorities. It is believed that competence development in a group setting is a very good method for empowering the target group and giving them responsibility. Developing social skills and elaborating projects is much more interesting in groups and we also experiences that peer-learning is a very powerful way of learning. This kind of coaching has not yet been organised, since much effort was put into establishing relationships with the youngsters and gaining trust. In the future programme we will try to bring youngsters that benefit from individual coaching together and organize group training to include training in applying for a job and group based dynamic coaching, with a focus on key competence development.

Finally, an important weakness of the programme is the fact that it has almost only reached out to boys of Moroccan origin. This certainly has to do with the profile of the WAC counsellors, which permits an easy contact with these youngsters, thanks to common cultural codes, language skills, etc. As was mentioned before, the WAC counsellors are a role model to these youngsters. Anyhow, since there are also other ethnic minorities youth and girls in the different neighbourhoods that could benefit from this programme, we think that it's our duty to also reach out to these groups. Therefore a key aim of the programme is to broaden the WAC counselling to girls and other ethnic minorities.

Since girls aren't present in the youth hangout spots, the WAC counsellors will have to be present at other places, such as more formal places like schools. This will probably also imply another profile for the WAC counsellor. However, several actions have already been undertaken or are planned in this regard: in YCC De Branderij a special training for youth workers and youth leaders for girls was successfully organized and cooperation with KIDS, who have a special girls programme, will entail greater contact with girls.

In YCC 21N cooperation will be set up in 2011 between the existing outreach work and Levanto to work with young people from Roma families. The idea is to produce a movie on youth unemployment with youngsters from these families. Research will also be carried out the second half of 2011 to examine the free time activities of girls and youngsters from other ethnic origins.

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Annex

Table 8: Population of Antwerp in 2010, by nationality and district

	% Belgians	% EU15	% non-EU
Antwerpen	75,6	7,6	14,3
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	96,0	2,8	1,0
Ekeren	95,2	2,4	2,0
Merksem	89,8	3,4	5,6
Hoboken	89,6	3,2	6,3
Wilrijk	90,7	3,2	5,0
Berchem	86,5	4,7	6,9
Borgerhout	78,6	5,5	14,2
Deurne	87,0	3,9	7,6
Unknown	90,1	2,0	7,9
Total	83,3	5,2	9,7

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Table 9: Population of Antwerp in 2010, by origin and district

	% native population	% new Belgians	% ethnic minorities
Antwerpen	58,2	17,4	41,8
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	90,8	5,2	9,2
Ekeren	91,7	3,5	8,3
Merksem	80,7	9,0	19,3
Hoboken	75,9	13,7	24,1
Wilrijk	81,1	9,6	18,9
Berchem	76,8	9,7	23,2
Borgerhout	55,5	23,1	44,5
Deurne	74,2	12,8	25,8
Unknown	71,1	19,1	28,9
Total	69,3	14,0	30,7

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Table 10: Share of people with non-EU origins in the total population of Antwerp in 2010, by country of origin and district

	% ethnic minorities non-EU	% Europe outside EU	% Moroccans	% Turks	% rest of Asia	% rest of Africa	% America and Oceania

Antwerpen	28,4	2,5	8,1	3,7	6,5	4,1	1,5
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	3,9	0,9	1,2	0,1	0,5	0,7	0,2
Ekeren	3,6	0,8	0,3	0,3	1,0	0,5	0,4
Merksem	12,9	2,8	3,8	1,9	1,9	1,3	0,4
Hoboken	18,0	1,5	9,5	4,0	1,2	0,9	0,3
Wilrijk	12,0	1,6	4,0	1,7	2,8	0,8	0,5
Berchem	14,1	1,4	3,7	3,6	2,5	1,6	0,7
Borgerhout	34,3	2,9	22,5	0,6	2,8	3,8	0,6
Deurne	17,4	2,9	7,3	1,2	2,4	1,7	0,6
Unknown	24,3	4,6	4,6	10,5	0,7	0,7	1,3
Total	21,0	2,3	7,8	2,5	3,8	2,5	0,9

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Table 11: Unemployment pressure¹⁸ in Antwerp in 2010, by age and district

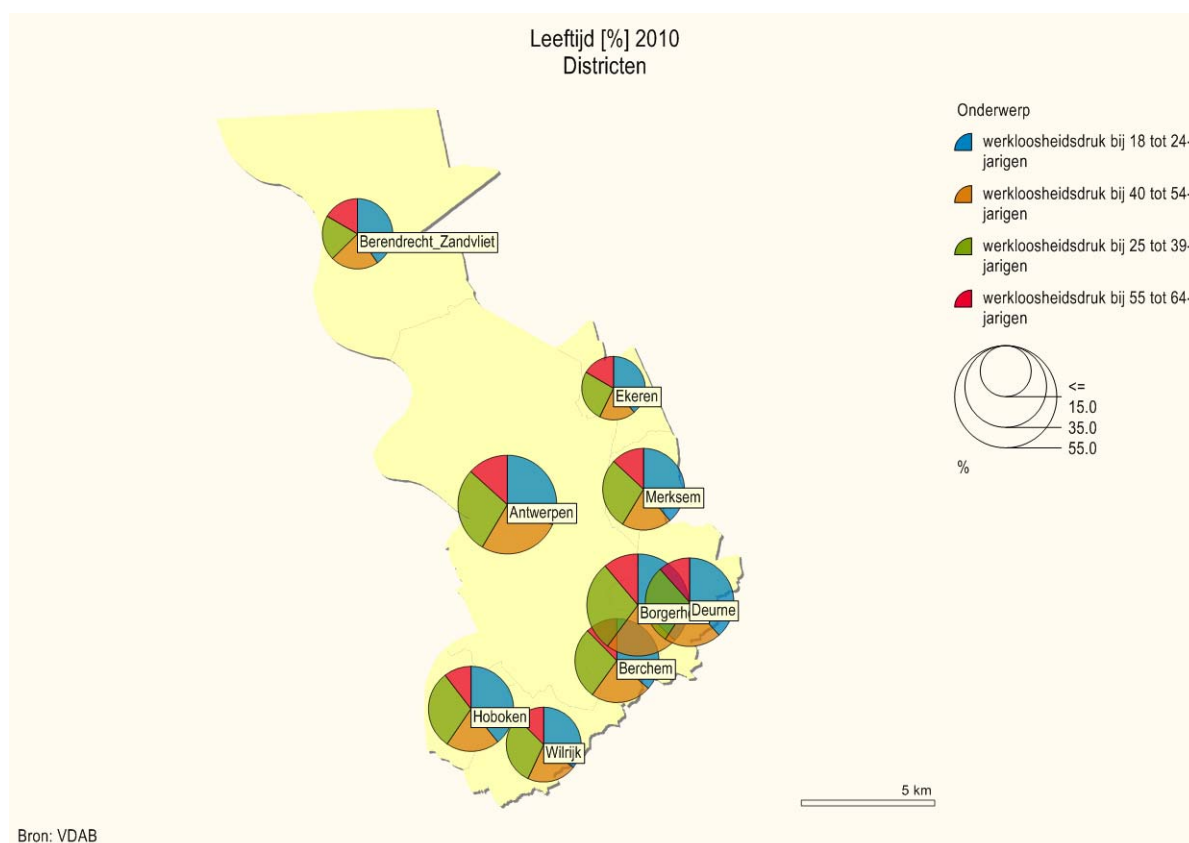
	unemployment pressure among 18 to 24-year-olds	unemployment pressure among 40 to 54-year-olds	unemployment pressure among 25 to 39-year-olds	unemployment pressure among 55 to 64-year-olds
Antwerpen	16,4	13,9	14,6	6,9
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	10,7	5,9	5,5	4,4
Ekeren	8,4	4,0	5,7	3,6
Merksem	14,0	7,1	10,2	4,7
Hoboken	15,0	7,8	11,5	4,0
Wilrijk	10,8	6,5	9,3	3,8
Berchem	13,6	8,7	10,3	4,6
Borgerhout	20,7	12,8	16,0	6,2
Deurne	16,2	8,8	12,3	4,9
Onbekend	0,0	9,4	2,2	0,0
Totaal	15,4	10,1	12,7	5,4

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Figure 6: Unemployment pressure¹⁹ in Antwerp in 2010, by age and district

¹⁸ The unemployment pressure is calculated by dividing the unemployed population between 18 and 64 years old by the total population between 18 and 64 years old. The unemployment pressure is therefore lower than the unemployment rate.

¹⁹ The unemployment pressure is calculated by dividing the unemployed population between 18 and 64 years old by the total population between 18 and 64 years old. The unemployment pressure is therefore lower than the unemployment rate.



Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

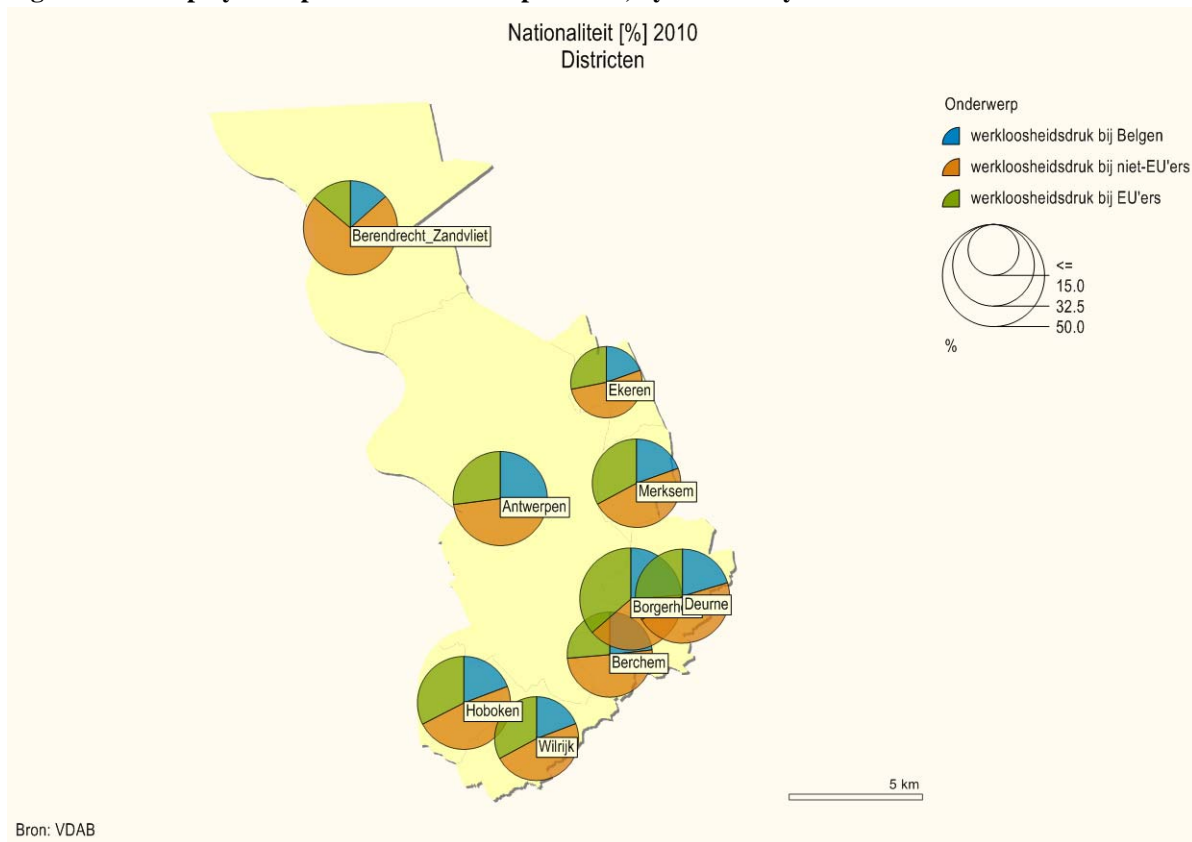
Table 12: Unemployment pressure²⁰ in Antwerp in 2010, by nationality and district

	unemployment pressure among Belgians	unemployment pressure among non- EU citizens	unemployment pressure among EU citizens
Antwerpen	12,4	19,2	11,7
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	5,8	31,3	6,0
Ekeren	4,8	12,8	6,9
Merksem	7,5	18,3	12,6
Hoboken	8,1	20,3	13,7
Wilrijk	6,6	16,5	11,3
Berchem	8,2	17,8	9,3
Borgerhout	12,3	20,6	18,8
Deurne	8,8	20,0	14,4
Unknown	2,2	12,5	33,3
Total	9,6	19,2	12,4

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

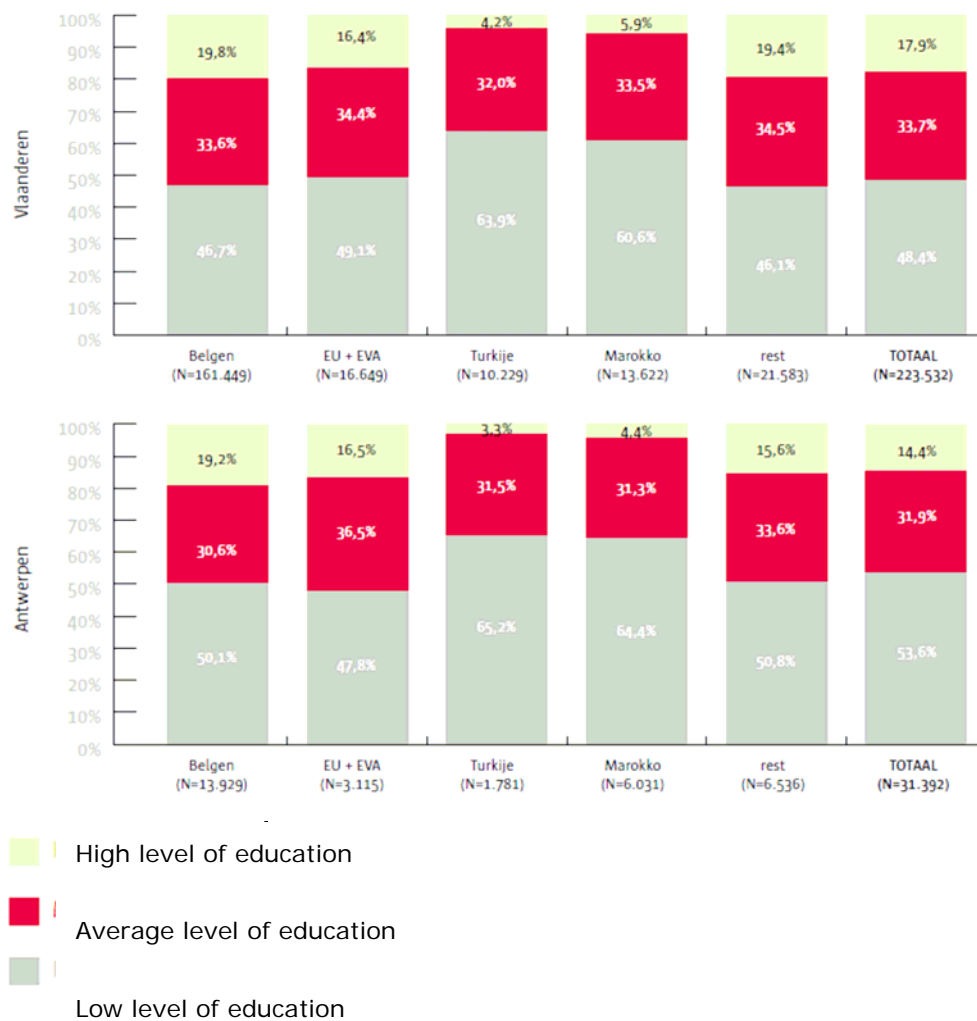
²⁰ The unemployment pressure is calculated by dividing the unemployed population between 18 and 64 years old by the total population between 18 and 64 years old. The unemployment pressure is therefore lower than the unemployment rate.

Figure 7: Unemployment pressure in Antwerp in 2010, by nationality and district



Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Figure 8: Unemployed population by origin and educational level in Antwerp and Flanders, July 2009



Source: Stad Antwerpen, 2009b, p.5.

Table 13: Population on welfare in Antwerp in 2009, by district

	Total number of inhabitants [number]	total number of people on welfare [number]	% of people on welfare among working-age population [%]
Antwerpen	177.670	3.632	3,0
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	9.697	24	0,4
Ekeren	22.588	47	0,3
Merksem	41.759	299	1,1
Hoboken	35.169	148	0,7
Wilrijk	38.974	207	0,8
Berchem	41.401	342	1,3
Borgerhout	43.347	607	2,2
Deurne	71.809	485	1,1
Unknown	42	-	-
Total	482.456	5.791	1,8

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Table 14: Share of people on welfare in Antwerp in 2009, by age and district

	% of people on welfare among working-age population	% of people on welfare among 18 to 24-year-olds	% of people on welfare among 25 to 39-year-olds	% of people on welfare among 40 to 54-year-olds	% of people on welfare among 55 to 64-year-olds
Antwerpen	3,0	3,4	2,8	2,8	3,8
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	0,4	0,0	0,3	0,4	0,7
Ekeren	0,3	0,5	0,3	0,4	0,3
Merksem	1,1	1,5	1,5	0,8	0,8
Hoboken	0,7	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,8
Wilrijk	0,8	0,7	1,1	0,6	0,7
Berchem	1,3	1,8	1,4	1,0	1,4
Borgerhout	2,2	2,5	2,3	2,0	2,3
Deurne	1,1	1,2	1,2	0,8	1,2
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,8	2,1	1,9	1,5	2,0

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Table 15: Share of people on welfare in Antwerp in 2009, by nationality and district

	% of people on welfare among working-age population	% of Belgians on welfare among working-age population	% of EU citizens on welfare among working-age population	% of non-EU citizens on welfare among working-age population
Antwerpen	3,0	1,9	1,4	8,6
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	0,4	0,3	0,9	3,4
Ekeren	0,3	0,3	0,4	2,5
Merksem	1,1	0,6	1,2	8,8
Hoboken	0,7	0,4	0,3	3,8
Wilrijk	0,8	0,5	1,1	5,8
Berchem	1,3	0,8	0,7	7,2
Borgerhout	2,2	1,1	1,6	7,4
Deurne	1,1	0,6	0,9	5,6
Unknown	-	-	-	-
Total	1,8	1,0	1,2	7,7

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Table 16: Number of pupils in primary school with school delay in Antwerp in 2007, by district

	number of pupils in general primary schools	Number of pupils in general primary schools without school delay	Number of pupils in general primary schools with school delay	Number of pupils in general primary schools with 1 year of school delay	Number of pupils in general primary schools with more than 1 year of school delay
Antwerpen	10.239	6.881	3.358	2.649	709
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	681	524	157	142	15
Ekeren	1.556	1.324	232	217	15
Merksem	2.265	1.724	541	468	73
Hoboken	2.335	1.665	670	562	108
Wilrijk	2.234	1.818	416	375	41
Berchem	2.087	1.644	443	386	57
Borgerhout	3.074	1.986	1.088	828	260
Deurne	3.990	2.896	1.094	895	199
Unknown	197	140	57	50	7
Total	28.658	20.602	8.056	6.572	1.484

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Table 17: Number of pupils in secondary school with school delay in Antwerp in 2007, by district

	number of pupils in secondary schools	Number of pupils in secondary schools without school delay	Number of pupils in secondary schools with school delay	Number of pupils in secondary schools with 1 year of school delay	Number of pupils in secondary schools with more than 1 year of school delay
Antwerpen	10.312	3.765	4.975	1.986	2.989
Berendrecht_Zandvliet	845	418	322	81	241
Ekeren	1.805	1.089	591	139	452
Merksem	3.105	1.499	1.226	338	888
Hoboken	2.813	1.223	1.258	348	910
Wilrijk	2.617	1.430	956	305	651
Berchem	2.503	1.157	1.107	344	763
Borgerhout	3.509	1.115	1.844	761	1.083
Deurne	4.684	1.936	2.180	696	1.484
Unknown	215	71	111	50	61
Total	32.408	13.703	14.570	5.048	9.522

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c

Table 18: Employment per sector in Antwerp, by sex and origin

	Natives		Of Turkish origin		Of Moroccan origin		Total
	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	Man	Woman	%
Industry	10.5	1.9	26.8	1.3	32.7	3.9	14.3
Construction	8.8	2.8	10.6	0.0	12.7	0.0	6.6
Wholesale, retail, , maintenance and repairs	14.0	11.1	17.9	21.1	12.7	17.1	15.3
Hotels and restaurants	4.4	5.6	8.9	5.3	1.8	2.6	4.9
Transport, storage and communication	7.0	3.7	12.2	6.6	8.2	3.9	7.2
Property, Rental and Business Services	4.3	1.9	0.8	3.9	0.0	2.6	2.1
Banking, investment and insurance	1.8	33.7	2.4	10.5	2.7	3.9	3.8
Electricity, gas and water	2.6	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.8
Education	6.1	10.2	0.8	2.6	0.9	9.2	4.8
Health and Social Care	12.3	28.7	2.4	14.5	1.8	26.3	13.3
Other Community Services, Socio-Cultural Institutions and Personal Services	2,6	4.6	1.6	6.6	0.9	5.2	3.3
Government and Public Administration	7.9	7.4	4.1	3.9	10.9	6.6	6.9

Householding	0.9	3.7	1.6	11.8	2.7	10.5	4.4
Agriculture	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Others	16.7	14.8	8.1	11.8	11.8	6.6	11.9
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Vandezande et al., 2008, p. 44

Table 19: The five largest sectors of employment for native Belgian men and women, Antwerp, June 2001

Men	%	Women	%
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	8,9	Health and social work	16,0
Wholesale trade and commission trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	7,4	Education	13,2
Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products	7,0	Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	11,2
Land transport; transport via pipelines	6,4	Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles; repair of personal and household goods	10,1
Construction	6,3	Wholesale trade and commission trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	6,3

Source : Vertommen et al., 2006, p.139

Table 20: The five largest sectors of employment for men and women for N&W European origin, Antwerp, June 2001

Men	%	Women	%
Wholesale trade and commission trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	12,3	Health and social work	10,7
Construction	7,5	Wholesale trade and commission trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	9,9
Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products	5,9	Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles; repair of personal and household goods	9,6
Hotels en restaurants	5,6	Hotels en restaurants	8,7
Supporting and auxiliary transport activities; activities of travel agencies	5,3	Education	6,2

Source : Vertommen et al., 2006, p.139

Table 21: The five largest sectors of employment for men and women from South European origin, Antwerp, June 2001

Men	%	Women	%
Hotels en restaurants	13,4	Hotels en restaurants	12,2
Construction	12,5	Wholesale trade and commission trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	10,5
Wholesale trade and commission trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	8,1	Health and social work	9,3
Manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment	8,0	Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles; repair of personal and household goods	9,2
Temporary employment agencies and temporary employment	5,3	Industrial cleaning	9,2

Source : Vertommen et al., 2006, p.140

Table 22: The five largest sectors of employment for men and women from Moroccan origin, Antwerp, June 2001

Men	%	Women	%
Temporary employment agencies and temporary employment	12,4	Health and social work	18,8
Construction	9,7	Industrial cleaning	13,8
Agriculture, hunting and related service activities	9,6	Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles; repair of personal and household goods	12,1
Industrial cleaning	8,2	Temporary employment agencies and temporary employment	8,9
Hotels en restaurants	7,6	Hotels en restaurants	7,9

Source : Vertommen et al., 2006, p.140

Table 23: The five largest sectors of employment for men and women from Turkish origin, Antwerp, June 2001

Men	%	Women	%
Construction	23,0	Industrial cleaning	34,6
Manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers	14,6	Health and social work	16,1
Industrial cleaning	8,9	Hotels en restaurants	8,7
Temporary employment agencies and temporary employment	6,4	Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	6,0
Hotels en restaurants	5,3	Education	4,7

Source : Vertommen et al., 2006, p.140

Table 24: The five largest sectors of employment for men and women from Sub Saharan African origin, Antwerp, June 2001

Men	%	Women	%
Temporary employment agencies and temporary employment	22,2	Hotels en restaurants	17,5
Hotels en restaurants	10,5	Temporary employment agencies and temporary employment	15,7
Industrial cleaning	6,4	Health and social work	11,8
Construction	6,0	Industrial cleaning	9,6
Agriculture, hunting and related service activities	5,6	Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	7,8

Source : Vertommen et al., 2006, p.141

Table 25: Share of newborns in comparison to the total population in Antwerp in 2009, by nationality

	Total population	Births
% Belgians	83,6	77,4
% EU15	5,3	9,5
% non EU	9,6	13,1

Source: Stad Antwerpen, s.d.c.

Table 26: Study course in professional secondary school in Antwerp, by sex and origin

	Native pupils		Pupils with Turkish origin		Pupils with Moroccan origin		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	%
Mechanics and electricity	28,8	0.0	37.6	0.0	47.1	0.0	19.5
Wood	7.6	0.0	5.4	0.9	8.7	0.0	3.8
Construction	6.1	0.0	4.3	0.0	8.7	0.0	3.2
Agriculture and Horticulture	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Car	0.0	0.0	10.8	0.0	6.7	0.0	3.2
Commerce and Office	10.6	22.2	23.6	43.7	14.4	32.7	25.8
Tourism	6.1	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	1.0	1.3
People Care	3.1	38.9	0.0	16.4	0.0	29.7	13.4
Body Care	1.5	7.4	4.3	12.7	0.0	6.9	5.7
Nutrition	4.5	9.3	3.2	0.0	1.0	5.0	3.0
Art and design	12.1	3.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	5.0	3.0
IT (computers and software)	1.5	3.7	4.3	0.9	4.8	2.0	3.0

Others	16.7	14.8	7.5	23.6	7.7	17.8	14.8
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Source : Vandezande et al., 2008, p. 20).

Table 27: Study visits and conferences on the YCC

Date	Organisation	Objective
31-01-2008	Flemish public administration, department Work, Department Education and training and Department Culture, Youth and Sports	Contribution to the Conference “APEL in policy and practice. Challenges for Flanders in response to the OECD-review.
30-05-2008	Formaat vzw, ECYC (European Confederation of Youth Clubs), YFJ (Youth Forum Jeunesse) and the City of Antwerp.	Contribution to the ROLO-Conference (Recognition of learning outcomes in youth work).
16-10-2008	Study Visit South Africa	Visit and exchange of experience on the YCCs and C-Stick with South African Youth policy advisors, on demand of JINT ²¹
19 & 20-05-2009	SALTO (Support and Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities) Inclusion, SALTO Training and Cooperation and 3 National Agencies	Contribution to the Conference ‘The recognition of non-formal learning and inclusion’.
22 to 24-06-2009	EIFEL (European Institute for E-Learning)	Contribution to the Learning Forum London and e-Portfolio Conference on ‘Key Competencies – Skills for life’.
16 to 18 – 09-2009	My Generation	Contribution to the workshop ‘Education and Employment in Göteborg: presentation of the C-Stick and WAC counselling
09-10-2009	My Generation	Study Visit of delegation from Rotterdam to the YCCs and RAC counselling
30-10-2009	My Generation	Study Visit of delegation from Göteborg to the YCC
10 to 15 – 11-2009	SALTO resources centre network and the Portuguese National agency	Contribution to the Tool fair 2009, a yearly event for 100 youth workers to share innovative practices and tools.
10 & 11-12-2009	European Youth Forum & University of Ghent	Contribution to the conference: “Where Formal and Non-Formal Education meet: 4th Dialogue on the recognition of Non-Formal Education”
26-11-2009	Study Visit delegation from Romania	Visit of JES vzw, exchange of experiences concerning transition from education to labour market, on demand of JINT
14-01-2010	High School Plantijn (Antwerp), module social work	Guest lecture on recognition of non-formal learning and C-Stick
25-03-2010	High School Kortrijk, module young offenders	Visit of the YCCs
26-03-2010	Study Visit Göteborg	Visit of the YCCs and exchange of experience in the framework of My Generation.

²¹ JINT is the centre of expertise on international youth exchanges and international youth policy and is the National Agency for the Youth in Action programme.

26-04-2010	Study visit Luxemburg	Visit of the YCCs, on demand of JINT
20-05-2010	Study visit Spain	Visit of the YCCs, on the demand of JINT
08-07-2010	Youth in Action and Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union - Youth	Contribution to the “1 st European Youth Work Convention” on cross-sector youth work, the recognition of informal learning and the YCCs
09-07-2010	Study visit Birmingham	Visit of the YCCs by Tim Evans, director of Worth Unlimited, exchange of experiences
15-07-2010	Study visit Pascal Smet, Minister of Youth and Education	Visit of the YCCs
28-09-2010 – 01-10-2010	My Generation	My Generation Conference Valencia
19 to 21-10-2010	National Agency Estonia, ESF Programme “Developing Youth Work Quality”	Contribution to the “Youth employment Seminar” on the YCCs and recognition of informal learning
27-11-2010	Youth in Action and Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union - Youth	Contribution to Urban Youth and Europe Day on the recognition of informal learning
01-10-2010-31-12-2010	High School Karel de Grote, module social work	Visit of the YCCs, Elaboration of three projects on the YCCs: application of the concept of the YCCs in different settings.