

## 1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

On this page

1. [Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy](#)
  2. [Cooperation between policy-making and research](#)
  3. [National Statistics and available data sources](#)
  4. [Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field](#)
- 

### Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

**Youth Research Platform (JeugdOnderzoeksPlatform, JOP)**[The Youth Research Platform \(JOP\)](#) was created in the spring of 2003 at the initiative of the Flemish Minister for Home Affairs, Culture, Youth and the Civil Service. The JOP has performed policy-oriented research activities since then. JOP is an interdisciplinary and interuniversity partnership of three research groups: (1) Research group Tempus Omnia Revelat (Vrije Universiteit Brussel); (2) Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy (Ghent University); (3) Youth Criminology research group (LINC, KU Leuven). **Knowledge Centre for Children's Rights (KeKi)** Furthermore, the Parliament Act of 2012 on Flemish youth and children's rights policy also recognizes a '[Knowledge Centre for Children's Rights](#)' (KeKi). The main objective of this Knowledge Centre is to increase the (scientific) knowledge on children's rights on the national and international level.

#### Thematic research

The Department of Culture, Youth, Media and Sport also commissions in depth studies on specific topics that are less measurable or specific target groups that remain invisible in surveys or registrations. Some examples of these studies are:

- De Pauw, P., Vermeersch, H., Cox, N., Verhaeghe, M. & Stevens, P. (2013). *Jeugdwerk met maatschappelijk kwetsbare kinderen en jongeren. Een onderzoek bij werkingen, begeleiding en deelnemende jongeren. (Youth work with disadvantaged children and young people. A study on youth work, its youth workers and the young people involved)*. Brussels: Departement Cultuur, Jeugd, Media en Sport ([report – only in Dutch](#))
- Schraepen, B., Maelstaf, H., Dehertogh, B., Halsberghe, M. & Van de Mosselaer, K. (2016) *Vrije tijd van jongeren in residentiële voorzieningen: persoonlijke ruimte of hulpverleningsruimte? Een onderzoek naar de vrijetijdsbesteding van kinderen en jongeren in de residentiële hulpverlening en de rol die het jeugdwerk daarin speelt. (Leisure of youth in residential facilities: personal space or assistance room? An investigation into the leisure activities of children and young people in residential care and the role of youth work therein)*

). Brussels: Departement Cultuur, Jeugd, Media en Sport. ([report – only in Dutch](#))

- Schraepen, B., Maelstaf, H. & Halsberghe, M. (2016). *Vrije tijd als handicapsituatie. De rol van het jeugdwerk binnen de vrijetijdsbesteding van kinderen en jongeren met een handicap. Leisure as a handicap situation. The role of youth work in the leisure activities of children and young people with disabilities*. Brussels: Departement Cultuur, Jeugd, Media en Sport ([report – only in Dutch](#))

## Cooperation between policy-making and research

Representatives of both JOP and KeKi participate in the 'Research network on children and young people in Flanders'. This assembly was set up in 2011 by the (at that time) Division Youth of the ministry. Today, the division 'Knowledge and Policy' organises the research network. It consists of youth policy makers and representatives of all relevant organizations that are involved in research on children, youth and children's rights.

Furthermore, the policy themes of the Flemish Youth and Children's Rights Policy Plan (2014-2019) are based on an extensive environmental analysis. The environmental analysis is the foundation and gives an overview of relevant trends, figures and scientific research, such as the [Youth Monitor](#).

## National Statistics and available data sources

### 'Cijferboek'

The Flemish government has been mapping the youth (work) policy of the local governments in a '[cijferboek](#)' (book with quantitative figures). 'Cijferboek' appeared every three years. It's a questionnaire, which monitored the policy of local governments concerning youth. This questionnaire resulted in quantitative figures on the local youth policy, such as political responsibilities, youth councils, presence and support of youth work, infrastructure of youth work, youth space, information for youth and communication and cooperation with other sectors.

This regularity stopped in 2014. As a result of the introduction of the policy- and management cycle at 1 January 2014 the planning- and reporting obligations of the local authorities drastically changed. From then on, the objectives of the municipal youth policy were included within a broad municipal multiannual plan. A new 'cijferboek' was then developed, based on the situation of the municipalities at the start of this reform. The university KULeuven was given the task to perform a baseline measurement in the local authorities in 2014. The goal was to examine in which manner the local authorities give shape to their youth(work)policy at the beginning of the strategic multiannual planning. This study is not intended as an evaluation of the policy but has to reveal in which manner policy is/was executed, what are opportunities and threats and how the Flemish administration can support the local authorities. The aim is to get a

clear view on how the local policymaking evolved after a period of four year. In 2016 a 1-measurement was done. This 1-measurement – again – tries to gain more insights into the setting up and the execution of the strategic multiannual plan. Themes such as the role of the youth civil servant, participation of children and young people, financial youth policy, ... are addressed. Also concrete policy recommendations are formulated. Just like in 2014, an extensive web survey was used and completed by youth civil servants and youth council members.

### **Youth Monitor (carried out by the Youth Research Platform or JOP)**

The [Youth Research Platform \(JOP\)](http://www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be/nl/publicaties) was founded in 2003 by the Flemish government in response to the identification of several problems and shortcomings in the state of Flemish youth research. Since 2005 the JOP gathers empirical data on the social life of contemporary Flemish youth on a recurrent basis. Therefore, the Youth Monitor, a standardized questionnaire, has been developed, which monitors the life-conditions and activities of young people. The content of the survey is based on other research instruments and explicitly aims to document several topics relevant to Flemish youth. The first Youth Monitor was conducted in 2005-2006, on a sample of 2503 Flemish 14- to 25- year old respondents. Since the administration of the first monitor in 2005, three new versions of the Youth Monitor have been administered, each also in a random sample of Flemish youth. In 2008 and in 2013 respectively 3710 and 3729 Flemish young people between the ages of 12 and 30 filled out a questionnaire. In 2018, a first Child Monitor was undertaken on a sample of 1226 Flemish children between 10 and 13 years old. Besides, a Youth Monitor was undertaken on a sample of 1411 Flemish young people between 14 and 25 years old. The child and youth surveys cover topics such as general well-being, school well-being, employment, school achievement, poverty, tolerance towards people from non-Belgian origin, and LGB people ... and relates them to different background indicators (gender, age, educational level, ...).

Next to these general surveys, 3 JOP city-monitors have been administered in the metropolitan cities Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels. These studies aim to bring more insight into the specificity of growing up and living in contemporary urban environments in Flanders. These studies offer a more comprehensive and more nuanced insights in the living conditions, attitudes and behaviour of young people growing up in Flemish cities. Special attention is paid to the social vulnerable groups.

Based on these studies, the JOP has published several books on the living conditions, attitudes and behaviour of young people growing up in Flanders and in Flemish cities. Also it published two books with a specific focus, one on gender differences and one on diversity. At the moment, the JOP is working on several new publications, amongst others, two new theme books, one on pressure on young people and one on education.

All information on publications of the Youth Research Platform can be found on:

<http://www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be/nl/publicaties>

Research, monitoring, data collection are the basis for a knowledge based policy and a better insight of children and young people. Next to the youth Youth Monitor, also other research on specific themes concerning youth is executed ad hoc.

### **JoKER (Kind en Jongereffectenrapport – Child and Youth effects report)**

Since 1997, the Flemish government is obligated by decree to make an impact report on draft decrees directly affecting the interests of children, persons under eighteen. By decree of July 18, 2008 (decree on the conduct of a Flemish youth and children's rights policy the child impact report (KER) has been extended to a child and youth impact report ([JoKER](#)).

Since 2013, the format of the JoKER is fully integrated into the regulatory impact analysis (RIA). RIA is a set of necessary and logical steps in preparing a policy measure. The aim is to ascertain the impact on children and young people under the age of twenty five. The JoKER, assesses the effects of new regulations on children and youth. Whenever a minister submits a draft decree to the Flemish Parliament that directly affects the interests of persons under 25 years, the draft must be accompanied by a JoKER. The Division Knowledge and Policy provides advice on JoKER.

### **Children's rights monitor**

In the last year of the legislature, a report is prepared which incorporates all available material on children's rights. This [report](#) aims at deepening and consistency and to assist in the environmental analysis of the next policy period, the reporting of the youth and children's rights policy and reporting to the UN Committee. In the monitor data is used of among other the youth monitors, EU-SILC, health survey, and different administrative data (e.g. of the Department of Education, the Department of well-being, ...). The monitor portrays the living conditions of children, as well as the context, processes and structures that have an impact on them. It provides materials to develop new or modify existing policies.

## **Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field**

The Flemish Government allocates funds to the Knowledge Centre for Children's Rights (KeKi) to increase the knowledge on children's rights on the national and international level.

Furthermore, the Department of Culture, Youth and Media has a line of funding for the Youth Research Platform (JOP) and for research on specific themes concerning children and young people or youth work. This research will be entrusted to an university, college, association or cooperation between an university and association.