

## **2.4 Youth volunteering at national level**

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## **National Programme for Youth Volunteering**

There are no national programmes for youth volunteering.

## **Funding**

There is no funding available for national programmes, but there is support for the youth work volunteers by the Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on a renewed youth and children's rights policy.

## **Characteristics of youth volunteering**

Data from the JOP-monitor 2018 demonstrate that around 35% of the young people between 14 and 25 years old participate in voluntary activities (Male: 33,6%; Female: 36,4%). 30,2% of the young people who are no longer going to school participate in voluntary activities and 37,4% of the young people who are still going to school participate in voluntary activities.

With regard to the ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds of youth volunteers, little information is available.

## **Support to young volunteers**

### **Types of support**

Any volunteer can receive a reimbursement for costs made during his/her voluntary activities,

provided that the organisation is willing to pay (however, the Law does not provide a legal right to volunteers to receive this reimbursement of costs).

The Act on the rights of volunteers (2005) defines two types of reimbursement to support (young) volunteers:

- The volunteer may either receive a fixed reimbursement (regardless of real costs): in this case, the volunteer can receive a maximum of 30.22 euros a day, for a maximum of 1,208.72 euros a year; and
- The organisation can opt for a system of “reimbursement of real costs”. In this case, the organisation only pays the expenses that are actually made by the volunteers (use of car, telephone, meals, etc) as proof has to be provided in for each expense.

The Policy Paper Youth (2014-2019) mentions that attention should be paid to the support of volunteers. A type of support is the reimbursement of the registration fee of training courses for youth volunteers by local governments.

### **Social security provisions**

The Act on the rights of volunteers (2005) contains provisions that refer to the legal status and social protection of (young) volunteers. In principle, liability for damage caused to third parties by a volunteer lies with the organisation (= immunity principle). If deceit, gross negligence or recurrent minor faults are involved, the volunteer him/herself can be held accountable.

The Act on Voluntary Work of 3 April 2009 of the Flemish government provides social security to (young) volunteers. Organisations working with volunteers should be covered by insurances on:

- civil liability of the organisation
- civil liability of the volunteer. Volunteers are ensured for damage done to the organisation, volunteers or third parties during their voluntary work.
- accidents and health problems suffered by volunteers during their voluntary work

Since the 1st of January 2018, Flanders provides a free insurance for volunteers. This insurance replaces the former collective insurance for volunteers that was provided by the Provincial Support Centres. From then on, the Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work provides an authorisation number which is needed to apply for this insurance. This free insurance is especially interesting for occasional or temporarily activities or for extra activities. This insurance especially benefits the volunteers working in voluntary organisations in Flanders and Brussels. The organisation can be an association or a non-profit private legal entity.

References:

<https://www.vlaanderen.vrijwilligt.be/gratis-vrijwilligersverzekering/>

<https://codex.vlaanderen.be/Portals/Codex/documenten/1024089.html>

## **Quality Assurance (QA)**

There are no official regulations on standards of quality for voluntary youth work. However, the five Provincial Support Centres, the Brussels Steunpunt (Support Centre) and the Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk (Flemish Support Centre for Volunteer Work) are responsible for the coordination and support of voluntary work in Flanders. These Support Centres also strive for a broader social – and formal – recognition of voluntary work.

In addition, organisations working with volunteers usually provide a form of training, education or support for volunteers which may or may not lead to the award of a certificate. Although such certification is not legally recognised, these initiatives give an indication of the basic quality.

On the other hands youth work organisations organise lots of courses and give certificates for youth animators, which are nearly all volunteers. These certificates have a legal ground in the Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 on a renewed youth and children's rights policy.

There is also no system of quality assurance.

The Flemish Government dictates in the Act on Voluntary Work of 3 April 2009 some rules to voluntary organisations in the welfare and health sectors and defines conditions governing recognition and subsidies.

In addition, the Flemish Government defines some rules concerning youth voluntary work organisations at Flemish level in the Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012.

## **Target groups**

Policies and initiatives do not identify specific target groups.