

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

On this page

1. [Governance](#)
 2. [Cross-sectoral cooperation](#)
-

Governance

Voluntary work of young people is not exclusively a youth policy theme (or any other policy area). Youth volunteering is regulated at federal level and further promoted on community-level.

Most relevant policy domains:

At federal level:

- Regulations on the legal status of volunteers ([Federal Public Service for Social Security](#))
- Advice and information on voluntary work (The High Council of Volunteers - [Hoge Raad voor Vrijwilligers](#))

At Regional (Flemish) level:

- Funding of voluntary activities and volunteer groups (organised volunteer work) in the welfare and health sectors (Flemish Government)
- Youth volunteer work opportunities through the recognition and funding of youth (work) initiatives (Ministry of Culture, Youth and Media)

In the following we focus at the regional level and describe for each of the domains the relevant responsibilities.

Main public bodies at the community-level (Flemish Community)

FLEMISH GOVERNMENT In the Flemish Community, the Flemish Government is the voluntary work's main funding source. Grants are allocated to a number of (semi)public and private organisations that support voluntary activities. The funding of voluntary activities and volunteer groups (organised volunteer work) in the welfare and health sectors is laid down in the Flemish Parliament Acts of the Flemish Community.

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, YOUTH AND MEDIA The Division Subsidising and Recognising - embedded in the department of Culture, Youth and Media - helps to create youth volunteer work

opportunities through the recognition and funding of youth (work) initiatives.

The Division Knowledge and Policy is responsible for the coordination of the Cross-sectoral policy on volunteering in Flanders ([Gecoördineerd Vlaams Vrijwilligersbeleid](#)). Every year an action plan is made built on 6 pillars. The horizontal consultation on volunteering policy monitors the plan. At least once a year a vertical consultation with representatives in different policy fields is organized. Youth work is one of the partners.

Non-governmental actors promoting volunteering

THE FLEMISH SUPPORT POINT FOR VOLUNTARY WORK The Flemish Support Point For Voluntary Work (Vlaams Steunpunt Vrijwilligerswerk) - established in 1977 as 'Platform voor Voluntariaat' - is the community's central, national volunteer centre. It receives an annual financial backing from the Flemish Ministry. It is flanked by a number of regional volunteer centres and provides support to voluntary activities and initiatives launched by Flemish people. It aims to obtain favourable legislation and regulations for volunteers from the Belgian Government as well as from the Flemish Community, and to make voluntary work accessible to all. The Centre provides support to voluntary activities and consists of advice, information and training. Up to 2017, five provincial support centres and one Brussels ('het punt') based support centre coordinate voluntary activities in the Flemish provinces and Brussels. They manage a decentralised database, acted as a mediator between organisations and candidate volunteers, got more people involved in volunteering and helped organisations enhance the quality of their activities by providing information and training and by setting up certain initiatives. Finally, there were local support centres for volunteering. Since 2018 Flanders has taken over the tasks of the provinces. The Flemish Support Point for Voluntary work develops into a Flemish knowledge center and got new tasks within the Coordinated Policy for Volunteering. For instance, they developed a central insurance for volunteers in small organisations without a legal ground. For the training and support of local volunteers the Flemish support point cooperates with the organisation Vormingplus in the different provinces.

THE KING BAUDOUIN FOUNDATION The King Baudouin Foundation (Koning Boudewijnstichting) was founded in 1976. It is an independent public benefit foundation which is active at the regional, federal and international level. For the King Baudouin Foundation, volunteers as well as the associations and institutions that provide opportunities for volunteering are important target groups. For many years, the Foundation has developed various projects and programmes for stimulating, rewarding and recognising voluntary work.

CERA CERA is a cooperative financial group, whose mission is to invest in wealth and prosperity. It supports projects with social objectives and has created tools to support voluntary action in Belgium. CERA also intend to create debate and reflection on the theme of volunteering.

ORGANISATIONS WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE Many organisations with a special focus on young people are commissioned to set up, support and monitor volunteer work

within youth work: the '[Ambrassade](#)' (support centre for youth work and youth information, secretariat of the Flemish Youth Council), [JINT](#) (Co-ordination body for International Youth Work), nationally organised youth associations, NGOs in the field of development co-operation,... These youth organisations or youth associations usually receive funding by the Flemish government and funding is based on specific funding regulations or grant schemes. Voluntary organisations are relatively independent.

Voluntary organisations are relatively autonomous (e.g. concerning their policies on volunteering or the quality of their work), as long as they meet the regulations on the legal status of volunteers.

General distribution of responsibilities

The legal status of volunteers is regulated at the federal level and further supported and promoted by the Flemish Community. The regional level is also responsible for the subsidisation and recognition of voluntary work and supports organisations that set up voluntary activities. Organisations at the local level then support and monitor voluntary work.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

As mentioned in 1.5 Cross-sectorial approach with other ministries, youth policy is a transversal policy. It is envisaged that each ministry takes its own responsibilities and defines tasks linked to the implementation of specific goals within the Youth Policy Plan, while the Minister for Youth is in charge of overseeing the process and reporting on the Plan's implementation to the government.

Besides the Flemish Youth and Children's Rights Policy Plan, the Act on Flemish Youth and Children's Rights Policy envisages three more instruments of youth policy:

- Impact study of new legislation on children and youth (JoKER)
- Contact points for youth and children's rights and a coordinating administration
- Youth Progress Report

The Flemish Government decided to develop a cross-sectoral policy on volunteering. The Minister of Culture and Youth is together with the minister-president in charge. In the Horizontal consultation group on volunteering policy (Horizontaal Overleg Vrijwilligersbeleid – HOV) the administrations that work with volunteers are represented: a.o. Education, Welfare, Culture, Youth, Sports. Besides them the Flemish Support Point for Voluntary work takes part and there is a representation of the organization Verenigde Verenigingen, this is an umbrella-organisation for all organisations in the non-profit sector.