

Key findings

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It takes a village to raise a child

Join us!

Key results of the VRAC project

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Photos: Summerschool Mechelen – Kevin Ceylan
Except slide 15: VRAC Training Leiden

VRAC in a nutshell

1025 children and young people were provided with additional learning opportunities during their leisure time

100 focus groups with children
and **30** focus groups with parents
... led to increased involvement

679
children and young people received individual support

611
professionals participated in education, training and exchange

77
policymakers were informed about the progress of the VRAC project

205
key people learned how to adapt their working method

11
other vulnerable neighbourhoods plan to use the same working method





The main aim of the VRAC-project

To develop a collaborative and a cocreative approach to school delay and early school leaving

“When a young person feels better and receives the care and necessary leisure opportunities he needs, this will have a positive impact on his studies.”

“It was cool that people listened to what we had to say. We weren’t immediately told ‘Yes’ or ‘No’, which made me feel that we were being taken seriously.”

School delay and early school leaving




In Europe **1 out of 10** people between 18 and 24 leave education and training with only lower secondary education, or less, and are no longer in education and training. That is **4,4 million** young people.

The European Commission and the different European countries have taken **lots of measures** over the past ten years to tackle this problem, with some success.

But the problem remains very **persistent**. Especially for underprivileged youth.

Two significant insights from ten years of policy:

- Schools cannot effectively work alone. They need to move from isolated and short-term actions to a more holistic and systemic approach.
- An approach can only be effective when cocreated with children and parents.



Collaborative and cocreative approach

VRAC set out to support schools, children and their families in tackling this challenge.

Their strategy rests on two main pillars:

1. Offer extended learning time

Based on the concept of Children's zones

2. Create frontline wellbeing teams

Based on the concept of Wrap Around care



**Leisure
Opportunities**

**Education at
School**

**Wellbeing
Support**

Three big challenges



Three big challenges

Adopt a shared vision

“In the case of a student who showed very rebellious behaviour at school and was almost suspended, a conversation with the parents brought a lot to light. The family was threatened with eviction and had no income. All family members were under tremendous stress. By systematically ‘looking over the wall’, a school can learn a lot about its pupils.”



Three big challenges

Create an integrated offer

“If a youngster is at the risk of dropping out of school, a file is put together and the young person is offered a pathway which may include a number of topics. When I look at that file from VRAC’s perspective, I see more support needs than for the young person alone. The family or teachers may also need support. I then try to look for additional support within the wider support network. That way we strengthen the young person, but also the contexts around that young person.”



Three big challenges

In cocreation with children, youngsters and their parents

“A girl suddenly said: ‘I feel sad’ and started to cry a bit. It was striking how difficult it was for her to say this openly. Here’s a place where this is possible, I feel there’s such a beautiful connection taking place here, and I think that’s really something that should be happening everywhere.”



Three big steps



Taking initiative

Towards a
shared vision

Initiating interaction

Towards an
integrated offer

Promoting integration

Towards participation
and co-creation

Some key findings and results

Towards a shared vision

- Make your vision clear and tangible.
- Formulate your vision broad enough. Make sure your vision is 'translatable' to different contexts.
- Express your vision in such a way that partner organisations see what they can gain from it.
- Choose words carefully. Make sure you do not reduce children and their families to their living conditions. Keep emphasising positive traits and talents.
- A vision is alive and evolving. Be aware of this from the start.
- Actions are important, but also keep telling why you are doing them. Keep sharing your approach, formally and informally.



Some key findings and results

Towards an integrated offer

- Creating an integrated service takes time.
- Start with a thorough analysis of the problem.
- Make an overview of all potential partners and what they can offer. Start from the firm conviction that everyone has the best interests of children and young people at heart.
- Formulate goals that partners share
- Make the added value of cooperation tangible in concrete actions.
- Don't tell others what to do but do it together with them.





Some key findings and results

Towards cocreation and participation

- Enable and support spontaneous participation processes.
- Organise specific participation processes, at school and in the neighbourhood. These trajectories have a clear goal and have a tighter, more guided approach.
- Support children, young people and parents to express their ideas, through mediation or direct contact.
- Advocate the interests of children, young people and parents when they are not present.



Policy recommendations

- 1. Invest in sustainable basic facilities on which you can build a network**
- 2. Facilitate an integrated approach through local management and coordination**
- 3. Break down the barriers**
- 4. Involve children, young people and their parents in your approach**

Policy recommendations

- 5. Create time and opportunity for vision development**
- 6. Enhance learning opportunities in leisure time**
- 7. Provide an accessible point of contact between wellbeing and education**
- 8. Support the development of a frontline wellbeing team**



Conclusion

You don't need to create a village from scratch. All the separate parts are there, but they don't yet form a village that works together.

With the right people in the right place, with time and with sustained effort, you can bring individuals and organisations closer together.

These pilots show you what can happen when you follow that path of collaboration and participation.

They confidently invite you continue their work in your day-to-day practice and to build durable structures that facilitate the village to work together.





THANK YOU!

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